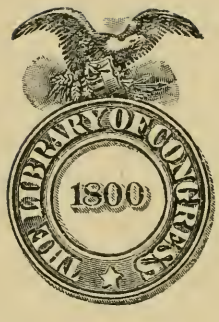
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Life
Margaret Sandt
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A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

IF Sydney Carton ever shone anywhere, he certainly never shone in the house of Doctor Manette. He had been there often, during a whole year, and had always been the same moody and morose lounger there. When he cared to talk, he talked well; but, the cloud of caring for nothing, which overshadowed him with such a fatal darkness, was very rarely pierced by the light within him.

And yet he did care something for the streets that environed that house, and for the senseless stones that made their pavements. Many a night he vaguely and unhappily wandered there, when wine had brought no transitory gladness to him; many a dreary daybreak revealed his solitary figure lingering there, and still lingering there when the first beams of the sun brought into strong relief, removed beauties of architecture in spires of churches and lofty buildings, as perhaps the quiet time brought some sense of better things, else forgotten and unattainable, into his mind. Of late, the neglected bed

in the Temple Court had known him more scantily than ever; and often when he had thrown himself upon it no longer than a few minutes, he had got up again, and haunted that neighborhood.

On a day in August, when the sight and scent of flowers in the City streets had some waifs of goodness in them for the worst, of health for the sickliest, and of youth for the oldest, Sydney's feet still trod those stones. From being irresolute and purposeless, his feet became animated by an intention, and, in the working out of that intention, they took him to the doctor's door.

He was shown up-stairs, and found Lucie at her work, alone. She had never been quite at her ease with him, and received him with some little embarrassment as he seated himself near her table. But, looking up at his face in the interchange of the first few common-places, she observed a change in it.

"I fear you are not well, Mr. Carton!"

"No. But the life I lead, Miss Manette, is not conducive to health. What is to be expected of, or by, such profligates?"

"Is it not—forgive me; I have begun the question on my lips—a pity to live no better life?"

"God knows it is a shame!"

"Then why not change it?"

Looking gently at him again, she was surprised and saddened to see that there were tears in his

eyes. There were tears in his voice too, as he answered:

"It is too late for that. I shall never be better than I am. I shall sink lower, and be worse."

He leaned an elbow on her table, and covered his eyes with his hand. The table trembled in the silence that followed.

She had never seen him softened, and was much distressed. He knew her to be so, without looking at her, and said:

"Pray forgive me, Miss Manette. I break down before the knowledge of what I want to say to you. Will you hear me?"

"If it will do you any good, Mr. Carton, if it would make you happier, it would make me very glad!"

"God bless you for your sweet compassion!"

He unshaded his face after a little while, and spoke steadily.

"Don't be afraid to hear me. Don't shrink from anything I say. I am like one who died young. All my life might have been."

"No, Mr. Carton. I am sure that the best part of it might still be; I am sure that you might be much, much worthier of yourself."

"Say of you, Miss Manette, and although I know better—although in the mystery of my own wretched heart I know better—I shall never forget it!"

She was pale and trembling. He came to her re-

lief with a fixed despair of himself which made the interview unlike any other that could have been holden.

"If it had been possible, Miss Manette, that you could have returned the love of the man you see before you—self-flung away, wasted, drunken, poor creature of misuse as you know him to be—he would have been conscious this day and hour, in spite of his happiness, that he would bring you to misery, bring you to sorrow and repentance, blight you, disgrace you, pull you down with him. I know very well that you can have no tenderness for me; I ask for none; I am even thankful that it cannot be."

"Without it, can I not save you, Mr. Carton? Can I not recall you—forgive me again!—to a better course? Can I in no way repay your confidence? I know this is a confidence," she modestly said, after a litttle hesitation, and in earnest tears, "I know you would say this to no one else. Can I turn it to no good account for yourself, Mr. Carton?"

He shook his head.

"To none. No, Miss Manette, to none. If you will hear me through a very little more, all you can ever do for me is done. I wish you to to know that you have been the last dream of my soul. In my degradation I have not been so degraded but that the sight of you with your father, and of his home made such a home by you, has stirred old shadows

that I thought had died out of me. Since I knew you, I have been troubled by a remorse that I thought would never reproach me again, and have heard whispers from old voices impelling me upward, that I thought were silent for ever. I have had unformed ideas of striving afresh, beginning anew, shaking off sloth and sensuality, and fighting out the abandoned fight. A dream, all a dream, that ends in nothing, and leaves the sleeper where he lay down, but I wish you to know that you inspired it."

"Will nothing of it remain? O Mr. Carton, think again! Try again!"

"No, Miss Manette; all through it, I have known myself to be quite undeserving. And yet I have had the weakness, and have still the weakness, to wish you to know with what a sudden mastery you kindled me, heap of ashes that I am, into fire—a fire, however, inseparable in its nature from myself, quickening nothing, lighting nothing, doing no service, idly burning away."

"Since it is my misfortune, Mr. Carton, to have made you more unhappy than you were before you knew me ——"

"Don't say that, Miss Manette, for you would have reclaimed me, if anything could. You will not be the cause of my becoming worse."

"Since the state of your mind that you describe, is, at all events, attributable to some influence of

mine—this is what I mean, if I can make it plain—can I use no influence to serve you? Have I no power for good, with you, at all?"

"The utmost good that I am capable of now, Miss Manette, I have come here to realize. Let me carry through the rest of my misdirected life, the remembrance that I opened my heart to you, last of all the world; and that there was something left in me at this time which you could deplore and pity."

"Which I entreated you to believe, again and again, most fervently, with all my heart, was capable of better things, Mr. Carton!"

"Entreat me to believe it no more, Miss Manette. I have proved myself, and I know better. I distress you; I draw fast to an end. Will you let me believe, when I recall this day, that the last confidence of my life was reposed in your pure and innocent breast, and that it lies there alone, and will be shared by no one?"

"If that will be a consolation to you, yes."

"Not even by the dearest one ever to be known to you?"

"Mr. Carton," she answered, after an agitated pause, "the secret is yours, not mine; and I promise to respect it."

"Thank you. And again, God bless you."

He put her hand to his lips, and moved toward the door.

"Be under no apprehension, Miss Manette, of my ever resuming this conversation by so much as a passing word. I will never refer to it again. If I were dead, that could not be surer than it is henceforth. In the hour of my death, I shall hold sacred the one good remembrance—and shall thank and bless you for it—that my last avowal of myself was made to you, and that my name, and faults, and miseries were gently carried in your heart. May it otherwise be light and happy!"

He was so unlike what he had ever shown himself to be, and it was so sad to think how much he had thrown away, and how much he every day kept down and perverted, Lucie Manette wept mournfully for him as he stood looking back at her.

"Be comforted!" he said, "I am not worth such feeling, Miss Manette. An hour or two hence, and the low companions and low habits that I scorn but yield to, will render me less worth such tears as those, than any wretch who creeps along the street. Be comforted! But, within myself, I shall always be, towards you, what I am now, though outwardly I be what you have heretofore seen me. The last supplication but one I make to you, is, that you will believe this of me."

"I will, Mr. Carton."

"My last supplication of all, is this; and with it, I will relieve you of a visitor with whom I well know

you have nothing in unison, and between whom and you there is an impassable space. It is useless to say it, I know, but it rises out of my soul. For you, and for any dear to you, I would do anything. If my career were of that better kind that there was any opportunity or capacity of sacrifice in it, I would embrace any sacrifice for you and for those dear to you. Try to hold me in your mind, at some quiet times, as ardent and sincere in this one thing. The time will come, the time will not be long in coming, when new ties will be formed about you—ties that will bind you yet more tenderly and strongly to the home you so adorn—the dearest ties that will ever grace and gladden you. O Miss Manette, when the little picture of a happy father's face looks up in yours, when you see your own bright beauty springing up anew at your feet, think now and then that there is a man who would give his life, to keep a life you love beside you!"

He said, "Farewell!" said a last "God bless you!" and left her.

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The marriage-day was shining brightly, and they were ready outside the closed door of the doctor's room, where he was speaking with Charles Darnay. They were ready to go to church; the beautiful bride, Mr. Lorry, and Miss Pross—to whom the

event, through a gradual process of reconcilement to the inevitable, would have been one of absolute bliss, but for the yet lingering consideration that her brother Solomon should have been the bridegroom.

"And so," said Mr. Lorry, who could not sufficiently admire the bride, and who had been moving round her to take in every point of her quiet, pretty dress; "and so it was for this, my sweet Lucie, that I brought you across the Channel, such a baby! Lord bless me! How little I thought what I was doing! How lightly I valued the obligation I was conferring on my friend Mr. Charles!"

"You didn't mean it," remarked the matter-of-fact Miss Pross, "and therefore how could you know it? Nonsense!"

"Really? Well! but don't cry," said the gentle Mr. Lorry.

"I am not crying," said Miss Pross; "*you* are."

"I, my Pross?" (By this time, Mr. Lorry dared to be pleasant with her, on occasion.)

"You were, just now; I saw you do it, and I don't wonder at it. Such a present of plate as you have made 'em, is enough to bring tears into anybody's eyes. There's not a fork or a spoon in the collection," said Miss Pross, "that I didn't cry over, last night after the box came, till I couldn't see it."

"I am highly gratified," said Mr. Lorry, "though upon my honor, I had no intention of rendering

those trifling articles of remembrance invisible to any one. Dear me! This is an occasion that makes a man speculate on all he has lost. Dear, dear, dear! To think that there might have been a Mrs. Lorry, any time these fifty years almost!"

"Not at all!" From Miss Pross.

"You think that there never might have been a Mrs. Lorry?" asked the gentleman of that name.

"Pooh!" rejoined Miss Pross, "you were a bachelor in your cradle."

"Well?" observed Mr. Lorry, beamingly adjusting his little wig, "that seems probable, too."

"And you were cut out for a bachelor," pursued Miss Pross, "before you were put in your cradle."

"Then, I think, said Mr. Lorry, "that I was very unhandsomely dealt with, and that I ought to have had a voice in the selection of my pattern. Enough! Now, my dear Lucie," drawing his arm soothingly round her waist, "I hear them moving in the next room, and Miss Pross and I, as two formal folks of business, are anxious not to lose the final opportunity of saying something to you that you wish to hear. You leave your good father, my dear, in hands as earnest and as loving as your own; he shall be taken every conceivable care of during the next fortnight, while you are in Warwickshire and thereabouts, even Tellson's shall go to the wall (comparatively speaking) before him. And when, at the fortnight's end, he

comes to join you and your beloved husband, on your other fortnight's trip in Wales, you shall say that we have sent him to you in the best health and in the happiest frame. Now, I hear somebody's step coming to the door. Let me kiss my dear girl with an old-fashioned bachelor blessing, before Somebody comes to claim his own."

For a moment he held the fair face from him to look at the well-remembered expression on the forehead, and then laid the bright golden hair against his little brown wig, with a genuine tenderness and delicacy which, if such things be old-fashioned, were as old as Adam.

The door of the doctor's room opened, and he came out with Charles Darnay.

He gave his arm to his daughter, and took her down stairs to the chariot which Mr. Lorry had hired in honor of the day. The rest followed in another carriage, and soon, in a neighboring church, where no strange eyes looked on, Charles Darnay and Lucie Manette were happily married.

Besides the glancing tears that shone among the smiles of the little group when it was done, some diamonds very bright and sparkling, glanced on the bride's hand, which were newly released from the dark obscurity of one of Mr. Lorry's pockets. They returned home to breakfast, and all went well, and in due course the golden hair that had mingled with

the poor shoemaker's white locks in the Paris garret, were mingled with them again in the morning sunlight, on the threshold of the door at parting.

It was a hard parting, though it was not for long. But her father cheered her, and said at last, gently disengaging himself from her enfolding arms, "Take her, Charles! She is yours!"

And her agitated hand waved to them from the chaise window, and she was gone.

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When the newly-married pair came home, the first person who appeared, to offer his congratulations, was Sydney Carton. They had not been at home many hours, when he presented himself. He was not improved in habits, or in looks, or in manner; but there was a certain rugged air of fidelity about him, which was new to the observation of Charles Darnay.

He watched his opportunity of taking Darnay aside into a window, and of speaking to him when no one overheard.

"Mr. Darnay," said Carton, "I wish we might be friends."

"We are already friends, I hope."

"You are good enough to say so, as a fashion of speech; but, I don't mean any fashion of speech. Indeed, when I say I wish we might be friends, I scarcely mean quite that either."

Charles Darnay—as was natural—asked him, in all good humor, and good-fellowship, what he did mean?

"Upon my life," said Carton, smiling, "I find that easier to comprehend in my own mind, than to convey to yours. However, let me try. You remember a certain famous occasion when I was more drunk than—than usual?"

"I remember a certain famous occasion when you forced me to confess that you had been drinking."

"I remember it too. The curse of those occasions is heavy upon me, for I always remember them. I hope it may be taken into account one day, when all days are at an end for me! Don't be alarmed; I am not going to preach."

"I am not at all alarmed. Earnestness in you, is anything but alarming to me."

"Ah!" said Carton, with a careless wave of his hand, as if he waved that away. "On the drunken occasion in question (one of a large number, as you know), I was insufferable about liking you and not liking you. I wish you would forget it."

"I forgot it long ago."

"Fashion of speech again! But, Mr. Darnay, oblivion is not so easy to me, as you represent it to be to you. I have by no means forgotten it, and a light answer does not help me to forget it."

"If it was a light answer," returned Darnay, "I

beg your forgiveness for it. I had had no other object than to turn a slight thing, which, to my surprise, seems to trouble you too much, aside. I declare to you, on the faith of a gentleman, that I have long dismissed it from my mind."

"Well! At any rate you know me as a dissolute dog, who has never done any good, and never will."

"I don't know that you 'never will.'"

"But I do, and you must take my word for it. Well! If you could endure to have such a worthless fellow, and a fellow of such indifferent reputation, coming and going at odd times, I should ask that I might be permitted to come and go as a privileged person here; that I might be regarded as an useless (and I would add, if it were not for the resemblance I detected between you and me), an unornamental, piece of furniture, tolerated for its old service, and taken no notice of. I doubt if I should abuse the permission. It is a hundred to one if I should avail myself of it four times in a year. It would satisfy me, I dare say, to know that I had it."

"Will you try?"

"That is another way of saying that I am placed on the footing I have indicated. I thank you, Darnay. I may use that freedom with your name?"

"I think so, Carton, by this time."

They shook hands upon it, and Sydney turned

away. Within a minute afterward, he was, to all outward appearance, as unsubstantial as ever.

When he was gone, and in the course of an evening passed with Miss Pross, the doctor and Mr. Lorry, Charles Darnay made some mention of this conversation in general terms, and spoke of Sydney Carton as a problem of carelessness and recklessness. He spoke of him, in short, not bitterly or meaning to bear hard upon him, but as anybody might who saw him as he showed himself.

He had no idea that this could dwell in the thoughts of his fair young wife; but, when he afterward joined her in their own rooms, he found her waiting for him with the old pretty lifting of the forehead strongly marked.

"We are thoughtful to-night!" said Darnay, drawing his arm about her.

"Yes, dearest Charles," with her hands on his breast, and the inquiring and attentive expression fixed upon him, "we are rather thoughtful to-night, for we have something on our mind to-night.'

"What is it, my Lucie?"

"Will you promise not to press one question on me, if I beg you not to ask it?"

"Will I promise? What will I not promise to my Love?"

What, indeed, with his hand putting aside the golden hair from the cheek, and his other hand against the heart that beat for him.

"I think, Charles, poor Mr. Carton deserves more consideration and respect than you expressed for him to-night."

"Indeed, my own? Why so?"

"That is what you are not to ask me? But I think—I know—he does."

"If you know it, it is enough. What would you have me do, my Life?"

"I would ask you, dearest, to be very generous with him always, and very lenient on his faults when he is not by. I would ask you to believe that he has a heart he very, very seldom reveals, and that there are deep wounds in it. My dear, I have seen it bleeding."

"It is a painful reflection to me," said Charles Darnay, quite astounded, "that I should have done him any wrong. I never thought this of him."

"My husband, it is so. I fear he is not to be reclaimed; there is scarcely a hope that anything in his character or fortunes is reparable now. But, I am sure that he is capable of good things, gentle things, even magnanimous things."

She looked so beautiful in the purity of her faith in this lost man, that her husband could have looked at her as she was for hours.

"And, O my dearest love!" she urged, clinging nearer to him, laying her head upon his breast, and raising her eyes to his, "remember how strong we

are in our happiness, and how weak he is in his misery."

The supplication touched him home. "I will always remember it, dear heart! I will remember it as long as I live."

He bent over the golden head, and put the rosy lips to his, and folded her in his arms. If one forlorn wanderer then pacing the dark streets, could have heard her innocent disclosure, and could have seen the drops of pity kissed away by her husband from the soft blue eyes so loving of that husband, he might have cried to the night—and the words would not have parted from his lips for the first time—

"God bless her for her sweet compassion!"

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In the black prison of the Conciergerie, the doomed of the day awaited their fate. They were in number as the weeks of the year. Fifty-two were to roll that afternoon on the life-tide of the city to the boundless everlasting sea. Before their cells were quit of them, new occupants were appointed; before their blood ran into the blood spilled yesterday, the blood that was to mingle with theirs to-morrow was already set apart.

Two score and twelve were told off. From the farmer-general of seventy, whose riches could not buy his life, to the seamstress of twenty, whose pov-

erty and obscurity could not save her. Physical diseases, engendered in the vices and neglects of men, will seize on victims of all degrees; and the frightful moral disorder, born of unspeakable suffering, intolerable oppression, and heartless indifference, smote equally without distinction.

Charles Darnay, alone in a cell, had sustained himself with no flattering delusion since he came to it from the Tribunal. He had fully comprehended that no personal influence could possibly save him, that he was virtually sentenced by the millions, and that units could avail him nothing.

Nevertheless, it was not easy, with the face of his beloved wife fresh before him, to compose his mind to what it must bear. His hold on life was strong, and it was very, very hard, to loosen; by gradual efforts and degrees unclosed a little here it clenched the tighter there; and when he brought his strength to bear on that hand and it yielded, this was closed again. There was a hurry, too, in all his thoughts, a turbulent and heated working of his heart, that contended against resignation. If, for a moment, he did feel resigned, then his wife and child who had to live after him, seemed to protest and to make it a selfish thing.

But all this was at first. Before long, the consideration that there was no disgrace in the fate he must meet, and that numbers went the same road wrong-

fully, and trod it firmly every day, sprang up to stimulate him. Next followed the thought that much of the future peace of mind enjoyable by the dear ones, depended on his quiet fortitude. So, by degrees he calmed into the better state, when he could raise his thoughts much higher, and draw comfort down.

Before it had set in dark on the night of his condemnation, he had traveled thus far on his last way. When he lay down on his straw bed he thought he had done with this world.

But, it beckoned him back in his sleep, and showed itself in shining forms. Free and happy, back in the old house in Soho (though it had nothing in it like the real house), unaccountably released and light of heart, he was with Lucie again, and she told him it was all a dream and he had never gone away. A pause of forgetfulness, and then he had even suffered, and had come back to her, dead and at peace, and yet there was no difference in him. Another pause of oblivion, and he awoke in the sombre morning, unconscious where he was or what had happened, until it flashed npon his mind, "this is the day of my death!"

Thus, had he come through the hours, to the day when the fifty-two heads were to fall. And now, while he was composed, and hoped that he could meet the end with quiet heroism, a new action began

in his waking thoughts, which was very difficult to master.

He had never seen the instrument that was to terminate his life. How high it was from the ground, how many steps it had, where he would be stood, how he would be touched, whether the touching hands would be dyed red, which way his face would be turned, whether he would be the first, or might be the last: these and many similar questions, in no wise directed by his will obtruded themselves over and over again, countless times. Neither were they connected with fear: he was conscious of no fear. Rather, they originated in a strange besetting desire to know what to do when the time came; a desire gigantically disproportionate to the few swift moments to which it referred; a wondering that was more like the wondering of some other spirit within his, than his own.

The hours went on as he walked to and fro, and the clocks struck the numbers he would never hear again. Nine gone forever, ten gone forever, eleven gone for ever, twelve coming on to pass away. After a hard contest with that eccentric action of thought which had last perplexed him, he had got the better of it. He walked up and down softly repeating their names to himself. The worst of the strife was over. He could walk up and down, free from distracting fancies, praying for himself and for them.

Twelve gone forever.

He had been appraised that the final hour was three, and he knew he would be summoned sometime, earlier, inasmuch as the tumbrils jolted heavily and slowly through the streets. Therefore, he resolved to keep two before his mind, as the hour, and so to strengthen himself in the interval that he might be able, after that time, to strengthen others.

Walking regularly to and fro with his arms folded on his breast, a very different man from the prisoner, who had walked to and fro at La Force, he heard one struck away from him, without surprise. The hour had measured like most other hours. Devoutly thankful to Heaven for his recovered self-possession, he thought "There is but another now," and turned to walk again.

Footsteps in the stone passage outside the door. He stopped.

The key was put in the lock, and turned. Before the door was opened, or as it opened, a man said in a low voice, in English: "He has never seen me here; I have kept out of his way. Go you in alone; I wait near. Lose no time!"

The door was quickly opened and closed, and there stood before him face to face, quiet, intent upon him, with the light of a smile on his features, and a cautionary finger on his lip, Sydney Carton.

There was something so bright and remarkable in

his look, that, for the first moment, the prisoner misdoubted him to be an apparition of his own imagining. But he spoke, and it was his voice, he took the prisoner's hand, and it was his real grasp.

"Of all the people upon earth, you least expected to see me?" he said.

"I could not believe it to be you. I can scarcely believe it now. You are not"—the apprehension came suddenly into his mind—"a prisoner?"

"No. I am accidentally possessed of a power over one of the keepers here, and in virtue of it I stand before you. I come from her—your wife, dear Darnay."

The prisoner wrung his hand.

"I bring you a request from her."

"What is it?"

"A most earnest, pressing, and emphatic entreaty, addressed to you in the most pathetic tones of the voice so dear to you, that you well remember."

The prisoner turned his face partly aside.

"You have no time to ask me why I bring it, or what it means; I have no time to tell you. You must comply with it—take off those boots you wear, and draw on these of mine."

There was a chair against the wall of the cell, behind the prisoner. Carton, pressing forward, had already, with the speed of lightning, got him down into it, and stood over him, barefoot.

"Draw on these boots of mine. Put your hands to them; put your will to them. Quick!"

"Carton, there is no escaping from this place; it never can be done. You will only die with me. It is madness."

"It would be madness if I asked you to escape; but do I? When I ask you to pass out at that door, tell me it is madness and remain here. Change that cravat for this of mine, that coat for this of mine. While you do it let me take this ribbon from your hair, and shake out your hair like this of mine!"

With wonderful quickness, and with a strength both of will and action, that appeared quite supernatural, he forced all these changes upon him. The prisoner was like a young child in his hands.

"Carton! Dear Carton! It is madness. It cannot be accomplished, it never can be done, it has been attempted, and has always failed. I implore you not to add your death to the bitterness of mine."

"Do I ask you, my dear Darnay, to pass the door? When I ask that, refuse. There are pen and ink and paper on this table. Is your hand steady enough to write?"

"It was when you came in."

"Steady it again, and write what I shall dictate. Quick, friend, quick!"

Pressing his hand to his bewildered head, Darnay

sat down at the table. Carton, with his right hand in his breast, stood close beside him.

"Write exactly as I speak."

"To whom do I address it?

"To no one." Carton still had his hand in his breast.

"Do I date it?"

"No."

The prisoner looked up at each question. Carton standing over him with his hand in his breast, looked down.

"'If you remember,'" said Carton, dictating, "'the words that passed between us, long ago, you will readily comprehend this when you see it. You do remember them, I know. It is not in your nature to forget them.'"

He was drawing his hand from his breast; the prisoner chancing to look up in his hurried wonder as he wrote, the hand stopped, closing upon something.

"Have you written 'forget them'?" Carton asked.

"I have. Is that a weapon in your hand?"

"No; I am not armed."

"What is it in your hand?"

"You shall know directly. Write on; there are but a few words more." He dictated again. "'I am thankful that the time has come, when I can

prove them. That I do so is no subject for regret or grief.'" As he said these words with his eyes fixed on the writer, his hand slowly and softly moved down close to the writer's face.

The pen dropped from Darnay's fingers on the table, and he looked about him vacantly.

"What vapor is that?" he asked.

"Vapor?"

"Something that crossed me?"

"I am conscious of nothing; there can be nothing here. Take up the pen and finish. Hurry, hurry!"

As if his memory were impaired, or his faculties disordered, the prisoner made an effort to rally his attention. As he looked at Carton with clouded eyes and with an altered manner of breathing, Carton—his hand again in his breast—looked steadily at him.

"Hurry, hurry!"

The prisoner bent over the paper once more.

"'If it had been otherwise;'" Carton's hand was again watchfully and softly stealing down; "'I never should have used the longer opportunity. If it had been otherwise;'" the hand was at the prisoner's face; "'I should but have had so much the more to answer for. If it had been otherwise—'" Carton looked at the pen and saw it was trailing off into unintelligible signs.

Carton's hand moved back to his breast no more. The prisoner sprang up with a reproachful look, but

Carton's hand was close and firm at his nostrils, and Carton's left arm caught him around the waist. For a few seconds he vainly struggled with the man who had come to lay down his life for him; but, within a minute or so, he was stretched insensible on the ground.

Quickly, but with hands as true to the purpose as his heart was, Carton dressed himself in the clothes the prisoner had laid aside, combed back his hair, and tied it with the ribbon the prisoner had worn. Then he softly called, "Enter there! Come in!" and the Spy presented himself.

"You see?" said Carton, looking up, as he kneeled on one knee beside the insensible figure, putting the paper in the breast: "is your hazard very great?"

"Mr. Carton," the Spy answered, with a timid snap of his fingers, "my hazard is not *that*, in the thick of business here, if you are true to the whole of your bargain."

"Don't fear me. I will be true to the death."

"You must be, Mr. Carton, if the tale of fifty-two is to be right. Being made right by you in that dress, I shall have no fear."

"Have no fear! I shall soon be out of the way of harming you, and the rest will soon be far from here, please God. Now, get assistance and take me to the coach."

"You?" said the Spy nervously.

"Him, man, with whom I have exchanged. You go out at the gate by which you brought me in?"

"Of course."

"I was weak and faint when you brought me in, and I am fainter now you take me out. The parting interview has overpowered me. Such a thing has happened here, often, and too often. Your life is in your own hands. Quick! Call assistance!"

"You swear not to betray me?" said the trembling Spy, as he paused for a last moment.

"Man, man!" returned Carton, stamping his foot; "have I sworn by no solemn vow already, to go through with this, that you waste the precious moments now? Take him yourself to the courtyard you know of, place him yourself in the carriage, show him yourself to Mr. Lorry, tell him yourself to give him no restorative but air, and to remember my words of last night, and his promise of last night, and drive away!"

The Spy withdrew, and Carton seated himself at the table, resting his forehead on his hands. The Spy returned immediately, with two men.

"How, then?" said one of them, contemplating the fallen figure. "So afflicted to find that his friend has drawn a prize in the lottery of Saint Guillotine?"

"A good patriot," said the other, "could hardly

have been more afflicted if the Aristocrat had drawn a blank."

They raised the unconscious figure, placed it on a litter they had brought to the door, and bent to carry it away.

"The time is short, Evrémonde," said the Spy, in a warning voice.

"I know it well," answered Carton. "Be careful of my friend I entreat you, and leave me."

"Come, then, my children," said Barsad. "Lift him, and come away!"

The door closed, and Carton was left alone. Straining his powers of listening to the utmost, he listened for any sound that might denote suspicion or alarm. There was none. Keys turned, doors clashed, footsteps passed along distant passages; no cry was raised, or hurry made, that seemed unusual. Breathing more freely in a little while, he sat down at the table, and listened again until the clock struck two.

Sounds that he was not afraid of, for he divined their meaning, then began to be audible. Several doors were opened in succession, and finally his own. A jailer, with a list in his hand, looked in, merely saying, "Follow me, Evrémonde!" and he followed into a large dark room, at a distance. It was a dark winter day, and what with the shadows without, he could but dimly discern the others who

were brought there to have their arms bound. Some were standing; some seated. Some were lamenting, and in restless motion; but these were few. The great majority were silent and still, looking fixedly at the ground.

As he stood by the wall in a dim corner, while some of the fifty-two were brought in after him, one man stopped in passing to embrace him, as having a knowledge of him. It thrilled him with a great dread of discovery: but the man went on. A very few moments after that, a young woman, with a slight girlish form, a sweet spare face in which there was no vestige of color, and large widely opened patient eyes, rose from the seat where he had observed her sitting, and came to speak to him.

"Citizen Evrémonde," she said, touching him with her cold hand. "I am a poor little seamstress, who was with you in La Force."

He murmured for answer: "True, I forget what you were accused of?"

"Plots. Though the just Heaven knows that I am innocent of any. Is it likely? Who would think of plotting with a poor little weak creature like me?"

The forlorn smile with which she said it, so touched him, that tears started from his eyes.

"I am not afraid to die, Citizen Evrémonde, but I have done nothing. I am not unwilling to die, if the Republic which is to do so much good to us poor,

will profit by my death ; but I do not know how that can be, Citizen Evrémonde. Such a poor weak little creature ! "

As the last thing on earth that his heart was to warm and soften to, it warmed and softened to this pitiable girl.

" I heard you were released, Citizen Evrémonde. I hoped it was true ? "

" It was. But I was again taken and condemned."

" If I may ride with you, Citizen Evrémonde, will you let me hold your hand ? I am not afraid, but I am little and weak, and it will give me more courage."

As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in them, and then astonishment. He pressed the work-worn, hunger worn young fingers and touched his lips.

" Are you dying for him ? " she whispered.

" And his wife and child. Hush ! Yes."

" O you will let me hold your brave hand, stranger ? "

" Hush ! Yes, my poor sister ; to the last."

. . . . . .

Along the Paris streets, the death-carts rumble, hollow and harsh. Six tumbrils carry the day's wine to La Guillotine. All the devouring and insatiate Monsters imagined since imagination could record

itself, are fused in the one realization, Guillotine. And yet there is not in France, with its rich variety of soil and climate, a blade, a leaf, a root, a sprig, a peppercorn, which will grow to maturity under conditions more certain than those that have produced this horror. Crush humanity out of shape once more, under similar hammers, and it will twist itself into the same tortured forms. Sow the same seed of rapacious license and oppression over again, and it will surely yield the same fruit according to its kind.

Six tumbrils rolled along the street. Change these back again to what they were, thou powerful enchanter, Time, and they shall be seen to be the carriages of absolute monarchs, the equipages of feudal nobles, the toilettes of flaring Jezebels, the churches that are not my father's house but dens of thieves, the huts of millions of starving peasants! No; the great magician who majestically works out the appointed order of the Creator, never reverses his transformations. "If thou be changed into this shape by the will of God," says the seer to the enchanted, in the wise Arabian stories, "then remain so! But, if thou wear this form through mere passing conjuration, then resume thy former aspect!" Changeless and hopeless, the tumbrils rolled along.

As the sombre wheels of the six carts go round, they seem to plough up a long crooked furrow

among the populace in the streets. Ridges of faces are thrown to this side and to that, and the ploughs go steadily onward So used are the regular inhabitants of the houses to the spectacle, that in many windows there are no people, and in some the occupation of the hands is not so much as suspended, while the eyes survey the faces in the tumbrils. Here and there, the inmate has visitors to see the sight; then he points his finger, with something of the complacency of a curator or authorized exponent, to this cart and to this, and seems to tell who sat here yesterday, and who there the day before.

Of the riders in the tumbrils, some observe these things, and all things on their last roadside, with an impassive stare; others, with a lingering interest in the ways of life and men. Some, seated with drooping heads, are sunk in silent despair; again, there are some so heedful of their looks that they cast upon the multitude such glances as they have seen in theatres, and in pictures. Several close their eyes, and think, or try to get their straying thoughts together. Only one, and he a miserable creature, of a crazed aspect, is so shattered and made drunk by horror, that he sings, and tries to dance. Not one of the whole number appeals by look or gesture, to the pity of the people.

There is a guard of sundry horsemen riding abreast of the tumbrils, and faces are often turned

up to some of them, and they are asked some question. It would seem to be always the same question, for, it is always followed by a press of people toward the third cart. The horsemen abreast of that cart, frequently point out one man in it with their swords. The leading curiosity is, to know which is he; he stands at the back of the tumbril with his head bent down, to converse with a mere girl who sits on the side of the cart, and holds his hand. He has no curiosity or care for the scene about him, and always speaks to the girl. Here and there in the long street of St. Honoré, cries are raised against him. If they move him at all, it is only to a quiet smile, as he shakes his hair a little more loosely about his face. He cannot easily touch his face, his arms being bound.

On the steps of a church, awaiting the coming-up of the tumbrils, stands the Spy and prison-sheep. He looks into the first of them: not there. He looks into the second: not there. He already asks himself, "Has he sacrificed me?" when his face clears, as he looks into the third.

"Which is Evremonde?" says a man behind him.

"That. At the back there."

"With his hand in the girl's?"

"Yes."

The man cries, "Down, Evrémonde! To the Guillotine all aristocrats! Down, Evrémonde!"

"Hush, hush!" the Spy entreats him timidly.

"And why not, citizen?"

"He is going to pay the forfeit: it will be paid in five minutes more. Let him be at peace."

But the man continuing to exclaim, "Down Evremonde!" the face of Evrémonde is for a moment turned toward him. Evrémonde then sees the Spy, and looks attentively at him, and goes his way. . . .

The Ministers of Sainte Guillotine are robed and ready. Crash!—A head is held up, and the knitting-women who scarcely lifted their eyes to look at it a moment ago when it could think and speak, count One.

The second tumbril empties and moves on; the third comes up. Crash!—And the knitting-women, never faltering or pausing in their work, count Two.

The supposed Evrémonde descends, and the seamstress is lifted out next after him. He has not relinquished her patient hand in getting out, but still holds it as he promised. He gently places her with her back to the crashing engine that constantly whirrs up and falls, and she looks into his face and thanks him.

"But for you, dear stranger, I should not be so composed, for I am naturally a poor little thing, faint of heart: nor should I have been able to raise my thoughts to Him who was put to death, that we

Masterpieces—Dickens.

SYDNEY CARTON.

might have hope and comfort here to day. I think you were sent to me by Heaven."

"Or you to me," says Sydney Carton. "Keep your eyes upon me, dear child, and mind no other object."

"I mind nothing while I hold your hand. I shall mind nothing when I let it go, if they are rapid."

"They will be rapid. Fear not!"

The two stand in the fast-thinning throng of victims, but they speak as if they were alone. Eye to eye, voice to voice, hand to hand, heart to heart, these two children of the Universal Mother, else so wide apart and differing, have come together on the dark highway, to repair home together, and to rest in her bosom.

"Brave and generous friend, will you let me ask you one last question? I am very ignorant, and it troubles me—just a little."

"Tell me what it is."

"I have a cousin, an only relative and an orphan, like myself, whom I love very dearly. She is five years younger thau I, and she lives in a farmer's house in the south country. Poverty parted us, and she knows nothing of my fate—for I cannot write—and if I could, how should I tell her! It is better as it is."

"Yes, yes; better as it is."

"What I have been thinking as we came along,

and what I am still thinking now, as I look into your kind strong face which gives me so much support, is this:—If the Republic really does good to the poor, and they come to be less hungry and in all ways to suffer less, she may live a long time: she may even live to be old."

"What then, my gentle sister?"

"Do you think:" the uncomplaining eyes in which there is so much endurance, fill with tears, and the lips part a little more and tremble: "that it will seem long to me, while I wait for her in the better land where I trust both you and I will be mercifully sheltered?"

"It cannot be, my child; there is no Time there, and no trouble there."

"You comfort me so much! I am so ignorant. Am I to kiss you now? Is the moment come?"

"Yes."

She kisses his lips; he kisses hers; they solemnly bless each other. The spare hand does not tremble as he releases it; nothing worse than a sweet, bright constancy is in the patient face. She goes next before him—is gone; the knitting-women count Twenty-Two.

"I am the Resurrection and the life," said the Lord; "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth in me shall never die."

The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the pressing on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward in one great mass, like one great heave of water, all flashes away. Twenty-Three.

A Child's Dream of a Star.

A Child's Dream of a Star.

THERE was once a child, and he strolled about a good deal, and thought of a number of things. He had a sister, who was a child too, and his constant companion. These two used to wonder all day long. They wondered at the beauty of the flowers; they wondered at the height and blueness of the sky; they wondered at the depth of the bright water; they wondered at the goodness and the power of God who made the lovely world.

They used to say to one another, sometimes, Supposing all the children upon earth were to die, would the flowers, and the water, and the sky be sorry? They believed they would be sorry. For, said they, the buds are the children of the flowers, and the little playful streams that gambol down the hill-sides are the children of the water; and the smallest bright specks playing at hide and seek in the sky all night, must surely be the children of the stars; and they would all be grieved to see their playmates, the children of men no more.

There was one clear shining star that used to

come out in the sky before the rest, near the church spire, above the graves. It was larger and more beautiful, they thought, than all the others, and every night they watched for it, standing hand in hand at a window. Whoever saw it first cried out, "I see the star!" And often they cried out both together, knowing so well when it would rise, and where. So they grew to be such friends with it, that, before lying down in their beds, they always looked out once again, to bid it good-night; and when they were turning round to sleep, they used to say, "God bless the star!"

But while she was still very young, oh very, very young, the sister drooped, and came to be so very weak that she could no longer stand in the window at night; and then the child looked sadly out by himself, and when he saw the star, turned round and said to the patient pale face on the bed, "I see the star!" and then a smile would come upon the face, and a little weak voice used to say, "God bless my brother and the star!"

And so that time came all too soon! when the child looked out alone, and when there was no face on the bed; and when there was a little grave among the graves, not there before; and when the star made long rays down toward him, as he saw it through his tears.

Now, these rays were so bright, and they seemed

to make such a shining way from earth to Heaven, that when the child went to his solitary bed, he dreamed about the star; and dreamed that, lying where he was, he saw a train of people taken up that sparkling road by angels. And the star, opening, showed him a great world of light, where many more such angels waited to receive them.

All these angels, who were waiting, turned their beaming eyes upon the people who were carried up into the star; and soon came out from the long rows in which they stood, and fell upon the people's necks, and kissed them tenderly, and went away with them down avenues of light, and were so happy in their company, that lying in his bed he wept for joy.

But, there were many angels who did not go with them, and among them one he knew. The patient face that once had lain upon the bed was glorified and radiant, but his heart found out his sister among all the host.

His sister's angel lingered near the entrance to the star, and said to the leader among those who had brought the people thither:

"Is my brother come?"

And he said "No."

She was turning hopefully away, when the child stretched out his arms, and cried, "O, sister, I am here! Take me!" and then she turned her beaming eyes upon him, and it was night; and the star

was shining in the room, making long rays down toward him as he saw it through his tears.

From that hour forth, the child looked out upon the star as on the home he was to go to, when his time should come; and he thought that he did not belong to the earth alone, but to the star too, because of his sister's angel gone before.

There was a baby born to be a brother to the child; and while he was so little that he never yet had spoken a word, he stretched his tiny form out on his bed, and died.

Again the child dreamed of the open star, and of the company of angels, and the train of people, and the rows of angels with their beaming eyes all turned upon those people's faces.

Said his sister's angel to the leader:

"Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Not that one, but another."

As the child beheld his brother's angel in her arms, he cried, "O, sister, I am here! Take me!" And she turned and smiled upon him, and the star was shining.

He grew to be a young man, and was busy at his books when an old servant came to him and said:

"Thy mother is no more. I bring her blessings on her darling son!"

Again at night he saw the star, and all that former company. Said his sister's angel to the leader;

"Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Thy mother!"

A mighty cry of joy went forth through all the star, because the mother was re-united to her two children. And he stretched out his arms and cried, O, mother, sister and brother, I am here! Take me!" And they answered him, "Not yet," and the star was shining.

He grew to be a man, whose hair was turning gray, and he was sitting in his chair by his fireside, heavy with grief, and with his face bedewed with tears when the star opened once again.

Said his sister's angel to the leader: "Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Nay, but, his maiden daughter."

And the man who had been the child saw his daughter, newly lost to him, a celestial creature among those three, and he said, "My daughter's head is on my sister's bosom, and her arm is around my mother's neck, and at her feet there is the baby of old time, and I can bear the parting from her. GOD be praised!"

And the star was shining.

Thus the child came to be an old man, and his once smooth face was wrinkled, and his steps were slow and feeble, and his back was bent. And one night as he lay upon his bed, his children standing round, he cried, as he had cried so long ago:

"I see the star!"

They whispered one another, "He is dying."

Aud he said, "I am. My age is falling from me like a garment, and I move toward the star as a child. And O, my Father, now I thank thee that it has so often opened, to receive those dear ones who await me!"

And the star was shining; and it shines upon his grave.

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

TOM PINCH and his sister having to part, for the dispatch of the morning's busines, had no opportunity of discussing the subject at that time. But Tom, in his solitary office, and Ruth, in the triangular parlor, thought about nothing else all day; and, when their hour of meeting in the afternoon approached, they were very full of it, to be sure.

There was a little plot between them, that Tom should always come out of the Temple by one way; and that was past the fountain. Coming through Fountain Court, he was just to glance down the steps leading into Garden Court, and to look once all round him; and if Ruth had come to meet him, there he would see her; not sauntering, you understand (on account of the clerks), but coming briskly up, with the best little laugh upon her face that ever played in opposition to the fountain, and beat it all to nothing. For, fifty to one, Tom had been looking for her in the wrong direction, and had quite given her up, while she had been tripping toward him from the first, jingling that little reticule of hers (with all

the keys in it) to attract his wandering observation.

Whether there was life enough left in the slow vegetation of Fountain Court for the smoky shrubs to have any consciousness of the brightest and purest-hearted little woman in the world, is a question for gardeners, and those who are learned in the loves of plants. But, that it was a good thing for that same paved yard to have such a delicate little figure flitting through it; that it passed like a smile from the grimy old houses, and the worn flag stones, and left them duller, darker, sterner than before; there is no sort of doubt. The Temple fountain might have leaped up twenty feet to greet the spring of hopeful maidenhood, that in her person stole on, sparkling, through the dry and dusty channels of the Law; the chirping sparrows, bred in Temple chinks and crannies, might have held their peace to listen to imaginary skylarks, as so fresh a little creature passed; the dingy boughs, unused to droop, otherwise than in their puny growth, might have bent down in a kindred gracefulness, to shed their benedictions on her graceful head; old love letters, shut up in iron boxes in the neighboring offices, and made of no account among the heaps of family papers into which they had strayed, and of which, in their degeneracy, they formed a part, might have stirred and fluttered with a moment's recollection of their ancient tender-

ness, as she went lightly by. Anything might have happened that did not happen, and never will, for the love of Ruth.

Something happened, too, upon the afternoon of which the history treats. Nor for her love. Oh no! quite by accident, and without the least reference to her at all.

Either she was a little too soon, or Tom was a little too late—she was so precise in general, that she timed it to half a minute—but no Tom was there. Well! But was anybody else there, that she blushed so deeply, after looking round, and tripped off down the steps, with such unusual expedition?

Why, the fact is, that Mr. Westlock was passing at that moment. The Temple is a public thoroughfare; they may write upon the gates that it is not, but so long as the gates are left open it is, and will be: and Mr. Westlock had as good a right to be there as anybody else. But why did she run away, then? Not being ill dressed, for she was much too neat for that, why did she run away? The brown hair that had fallen down beneath her bonnet, and had one impertinent imp of a false flower clinging to it, boastful of its license before all men, *that* could not have been the cause, for it looked charming. Oh! foolish, panting, frightened little heart, why did she run away!

Merrily the tiny fountain played, and merrily the

dimples sparkled on its sunny face. John Westlock hurried after her. Softly the whispering water broke and fell; and roguishly the dimples twinkled, as he stole upon her footsteps.

Oh, foolish, panting, timid little heart, why did she feign to be unconscious of his coming! Why wish herself so far away, yet be so flutteringly happy there!

"I felt sure it was you," said John, when he overtook her, in the sanctuary of Garden Court. "I knew I couldn't be mistaken."

She was *so* surprised.

"You are waiting for your brother," said John. "Let me bear you company."

So light was the touch of the coy little hand, that he glanced down to assure himself he had it on his arm. But his glance, stopping for an instant at the bright eyes, forgot its first design, and went no farther.

They walked up and down three or four times speaking about Tom and his mysterious employment. Now that was a very natural and innocent subject, surely. Then why, whenever Ruth lifted up her eyes, did she let them fall again immediately, and seek the uncongenial pavement of the court? They were not such eyes as shun the light; they were not such eyes as require to be hoarded to enhance their value. They were much too precious and too

genuine to stand in need of arts like those. Somebody must have been looking at them!

They found out Tom, though, quickly enough. This pair of eyes descried him in the distance, the moment he appeared. He was staring about him, as usual, in all directions but the right one; and was as obstinate in not looking toward them, as if he had intended it. As it was plain that, being left to himself, he would walk away home, John Westlock darted off to stop him.

This made the approach of poor little Ruth, by herself, one of the most embarrassing of circumstances. There was Tom, manifesting extreme surprise (he had no presence of mind, that Tom, on small occasions); there was John, making as light of it as he could, but explaining at the same time, with most unnecessary elaboration; and here was she, coming toward them, with both of them looking at her, conscious of blushing to a terrible extent, but trying to throw up her eyebrows carelessly, and pout her rosy lips, as if she were the coolest and most unconcerned of little women.

Merrily the fountain plashed and plashed, until the dimples, merging into one another, swelled into a general smile, that covered the whole surface of the basin.

"What an extraordinary meeting!" said Tom. "I should never have dreamed of seeing you two together here."

"Quite accidental," John was heard to murmur.

"Exactly," cried Tom; "that's what I mean, you know. If it wasn't accidental, there would be nothing remarkable in it."

"To be sure," said John.

"Such an out-of-the-way place for you to have met in," pursued Tom, quite delighted. "Such an unlikely spot!"

John rather disputed that. On the contrary, he considered it a very likely spot, indeed. He was constantly passing to and fro there, he said. He shouldn't wonder if it were to happen again. His only wonder was that it had never happened before.

By this time Ruth had got round on the farther side of her brother, and had taken his arm. She was squeezing it now, as much as to say, "Are you going to stop here all day, you dear, old blundering Tom?"

Tom answered the squeeze as if it had been a speech. "John," he said, "if you'll give my sister your arm, we'll take her between us, and walk on."

Merrily the fountain leaped and danced, and merrily the smiling dimples twinkled and expanded more and more, until they broke into a laugh against the basin's rim, and vanished.

"Tom," said his friend, as they turned into the noisy street, "I have a proposition to make. It is, that you and your sister—if she will so far honor a

poor bachelor's dwelling—give me a great pleasure, and come and dine with me."

"What, to-day?" cried Tom.

"Yes, to-day. It's close by, you know. Pray, Miss Pinch, insist upon it. It will be very disinterested, for I have nothing to give you."

"Oh! you must not believe that, Ruth," said Tom. "He is the most tremendous fellow, in his housekeeping, that I ever heard of, for a single man. He ought to be Lord Mayor. Well! what do you say? Shall we go?"

"If you please, Tom," rejoined his dutiful little sister.

"But I mean," said Tom, regarding her with smiling admiration, "is there anything you ought to wear, and haven't got? I am sure I don't know, John: she may not be able to take her bonnet off, for anything I can tell."

There was a great deal of laughing at this, and there were divers compliments from John Westlock —not compliments, *he* said at least (and really he was right), but good, plain, honest truths, which no one could deny. Ruth laughed, and all that, but she made no objection; so it was an engagement.

"If I had known it a little sooner," said John, "I would have tried another pudding. Not in rivalry; but merely to exalt that famous one. I wouldn't on any account have had it made with suet."

"Why not?" asked Tom.

"Because that cookery book advises suet," said John Westlock; "and ours was made with flower and eggs."

"Oh good gracious! cried Tom, "ours was made with flour and eggs, was it? Ha, ha, ha! A beefsteak pudding made with flour and eggs! Why anybody knows better than that. *I* know better than that! Ha, ha, ha!"

It was unnecessary to say that Tom had been present at the making of the pudding, and had been a devoted believer in it all through. Bat he was so delighted to have this joke against his busy little sister, and was tickled to that degree at having found her out, that he stopped in Temple Bar to laugh; and it was no more to Tom, that he was anathematized and knocked about by the surly passengers, than it would have been to a post; for he continued to exclaim with unabated good humor, "flour and eggs! A beefsteak pudding made with flour and eggs!" until John Westlock and his sister fairly ran away from him, and left him to have his laugh out by himself; which he had; and then came dodging across the crowded street to them, with such sweet temper and tenderness (it was quite a tender joke of Tom's) beaming in his face, God bless it, that it might have purified the air, though Temple Bar had been, as in the golden days gone by, embellished with a row of rotting human heads.

There are snug chambers in those Inns where the bachelors live, and, for the desolate fellows they pretend to be, it is quite surprising how well they get on. John was very pathetic on the subject of his dreary life, and the deplorable make-shifts and apologetic contrivances it involved; but he really seemed to make himself pretty comfortable. His rooms were the perfection of neatness and convenience at any rate; and if he were anything but comfortable, the fault was certainly not theirs.

He had no sooner ushered Tom and his sister into his best room (where there was a beautiful little vase of fresh flowers on the table, all ready for Ruth.—Just as if he had expected her, Tom said), than seizing his hat, he bustled out again, in his most energetically bustling way; aud presently came hurring back, as they saw thrnugh the half-opened door, attended by a fiery-faced matron attired in a crunched bonnet, with particularly long strings to it hanging down her back; in conjunction with whom, he instantly began to lay the cloth for dinner, polishing up the wine glasses with his own hands, brightening the silver top of the pepper-castor on his coat sleeve, drawing corks and filling decanters, with a skill and expedition that were quite dazzling. And as if, in the course of this rubbing and polishing, he had rubbed an enchanted lamp or a magic ring, obedient to which there were twenty thousand supernatural

slaves at least, suddenly there appeared a being in a white waistcoat, carrying under his arm a napkin, and attended by another being with an oblong box upon his head, from which a banquet, piping hot, was taken out and set upon the table.

Salmon, lamb, peas, innocent young potatoes, a cool salad, sliced cucumber, a tender duckling, and a tart—all there. They all came at the right time. Where they came from, didn't appear; but the oblong box was constantly going and coming, and making its arrival known to the man in the white waistcoat by bumping modestly against the outside of the door; for, after its first appearance, it entered the room no more. He was never surprised, this man; he never seemed to wonder at the extraordinary things he found in the box; but took them out with a face expressive of a steady purpose and impenetrable character, and put them on the table. He was a kind man; gentle in his manners, and much interested in what they ate and drank. He was a learned man, and knew the flavor of John Westlock's private sauces, which he softly and feelingly described, as he handed the little bottles round. He was a grave man, and a noiseless; for dinner being done, and wine and fruit arranged upon the board, he vanished, box and all, like something that had never been.

"Didn't I say he was a tremendous fellow in his

housekeeping?" cried Tom. "Bless my soul! It's wonderful."

"Ah, Miss Pinch," said John. "This is the bright side of the life we lead in such a place. It would be a dismal life, indeed, if it didn't brighten up to-day."

"Don't believe a word he says," cried Tom. "He lives here like a monarch, and wouldn't change his mode of life for any consideration. He only pretends to grumble."

No John really did not appear to pretend; for he was uncommonly earnest in his desire to have it understood that he was as dull, solitary, and uncomfortable on ordinary occasions as an unfortunate young man could, in reason, be. It was a wretched life, he said, a miserable life. He thought of getting rid of the chambers as soon as possible; and meant, in fact, to put up a bill very shortly.

"Well!" said Tom Pinch, "I don't know where you can go, John, to be more comfortable. That's all I can say. What do *you* say, Ruth?"

Ruth trifled with the cherries on her plate, and said that she thought Mr. Westlock ought to be quite happy, and that she had no doubt he was.

Ah, foolish, panting, frightened little heart, how timidly she said it! . . . . . .

Ah, but it would have been a good thing to have had a coat of invisibility, wherein to have watched

little Ruth, when she was left to herself in John Westlock's chambers, and John and her brother were talking over their wine! The gentle way in which she tried to get up a little conversation with the fiery-faced matron in the crunched bonnet, who was waiting to attend her; after making a desperate rally in regard of her dress, and attiring herself in a washed-out yellow gown with sprigs of the same upon it, so that it looked like a tesselated work of pats of butter. That would have been pleasant. The grim and griffin-like inflexibility with which the fiery-faced matron repelled these engaging advances, as proceeding from a hostile and dangerous power, who could have no business there, unless it were to deprive her of a customer, or suggest what became of the self-consuming tea and sugar, and other general trifles. That would have been agreeable. The bashful, winning, glorious curiosity, with which little Ruth, when fiery-face was gone, peeped into the books and nick-nacks that were lying about, and had a particular interest in some delicate paper matches on the chimney-piece: wondering who could have made them. That would have been worth seeing. The faltering hand with which she tied those flowers together; with which, almost blushing at her own fair self as imaged in the glass, she arranged them in her breast, and looking at them with her head aside, now half resolved to take them out again, now

half resolved to leave them where they were. That would have been delightful!

John seemed to think it all delightful: for coming in with Tom to tea, he took his seat beeides her like a man enchanted. And when the tea-service had been removed, and Tom, sitting down at the piano, became absorbed in some of his old organ tunes, he was still beside her at the open window, looking out upon the twilight.

There is little enough to see, in Furnival's Inn. It is a shady, quiet place, echoing to the footsteps of the stragglers who have business there; and rather monotonous and gloomy on summer evenings. What gave it such a charm to them, that they remained at the window as unconscious of the flight of time as Tom himself, the dreamer, while the melodies which had so often soothed his spirit were hovering again about him! What power infused into the fading light, the gathering darkness; the stars that here and there appeared; the evening air, the City's hum and stir, the very chiming of the old church clocks; such exquisite enthralment, that the divinest regions of the earth spread out before their eyes could not have held them captive in a stronger chain?

The shadows deepened, deepened, and the room became quite dark. Still Tom's fingers wandered over the keys of the piano; and still the window had its pair of tenants.

At length, her hand upon his shoulder, and her breath upon his forehead, roused Tom from his reverie.

"Dear me!" he cried, desisting with a start. "I am afraid I have been very inconsiderate and unpolite."

Tom little thought how much consideration and politeness he had shown!

"Sing something to us, my dear," said Tom. "Let us hear your voice. Come."

John Westlock added his entreaties with such earnestness that a flintly heart alone could have resisted them. Hers was not a flinty heart. Oh dear no! Quite another thing.

So down she sat, and in a pleasant voice began to sing the ballads Tom loved well. Old rhyming stories, with here and there a pause for a few simple chords, such as a harper might have sounded in the ancient time while looking upward for the current of some half-remembered legend; words of old poets, wedded to such measures that the strain of music might have been the poet's breath, giving utterance and expression to his thoughts; and now a melody so joyous and light-hearted, that the singer seemed incapable of sadness, until in her inconstancy (oh wicked little singer!) she relapsed and broke the listeners' hearts again; these were the simple means she used to please them. And that these simple means pre-

vailed, and she *did* please them, let the still darkened chamber, and its long deferred illumination witness.

The candles came at last, and it was time for moving homeward. Cutting paper carefully, and rolling it about the stalks of those same flowers, occasioned some delay; but even this was done in time, and Ruth was ready.

"Good-night!" said Tom. "A memorable and delightful visit, John! Good-night!"

John thought he would walk with them.

"No, no. Don't!" said Tom. "What nonsense! We can get home very well alone. I couldn't think of taking you out."

But John said he would rather.

"Are you sure you would rather?" said Tom. "I am afraid you only say so out of politeness."

John being quite sure, gave his arm to Ruth, and led her out. Fiery-face, who was again in attendance acknowledged her departure with so cold a courtesy that it was hardly visible; and cut Tom, dead.

Their host was bent on walking the whole distance, and would not listen to Tom's dissuasions. Happy time, happy walk, happy parting, happy dreams! But there are some sweet day-dreams, so there are, that put the visitor of the night to shame.

Busily the Temple fountain murmured in the moonlight, while Ruth lay sleeping, with her flowers

beside her; and John Westlock sketched a portrait —whose?—from memory.

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Brilliantly the Temple Fountain sparkled in the sun, and laughingly its liquid music played, and merrily the idle drops of water danced and danced, and peeping out in sport among the trees, plunged lightly down to hide themselves, as little Ruth and her companions came toward it.

And why they came toward the Fountain at all is a mystery; for they had no business there. It was not in their way. It was quite out of their way. They had no more to do with the Fountain, bless you, than they had with—with Love, or any out of the way thing of that sort.

It was all very well for Tom and his sister to make appointments by the Fountain, but that was quite another affair. Because, of course, when she had to wait a minute or two, it would have been very awkward for her to have had to wait in any but a tolerably quiet spot; and that was as quiet a spot, everything considered, as they could choose. But when she had John Westlock to take care of her, and was going home with her arm in his (home being in a different direction altogether), their coming anywhere near that Fountain, was quite extraordinary.

However, there they found themselves. And an-

other extraordinary part of the matter was, that they seemed to have come there, by a silent understanding. Yet when they got here, they were a little confused by being there, which was the strangest part of all; because there is nothing naturally confusing in a Fountain. We all know that.

What a good old place it was! John said. With quite an earnest affection for it.

"A pleasant place indeed," said little Ruth. "So shady!"

Oh wicked little Ruth!

They came to a stop when John began to praise it. The day was exquisite; and stopping at all, it was quite natural—nothing could be more so—that they should glance down Garden Court; because Garden Court ends in the Garden, and the Garden ends in the River, and that glimpse is very bright and fresh and shining on a summer's day. Then, oh little Ruth, why not look boldly at it! Why fit that tiny precious, little foot into the cracked corner of an insensible old flagstone in the pavement; and be so very anxious to adjust it to a nicety!

If the Fiery-faced matron in the crunched bonnet could have seen them as they walked away, how many years' purchase, might Fiery Face have been disposed to take for her situation in Furnival's Inn as laundress to Mr. Westlock!

They went away, but not through London's streets!

Through some enchanted city, where the pavements were of air; where all the rough sounds of a stirring town were softened into gentle music; where every thing was happy; where there was no distance, and no time. There were two good-tempered burly draymen letting down big butts of beer into a cellar, somewhere; and when John helped her—almost lifted her—the lightest, easiest, neatest thing you ever saw—across the rope, they said he owed them a good turn for giving him the chance. Celestial draymen!

Green pastures in the summer tide, deep-littered straw-yards in the winter, no stint of corn or clover, ever, to that noble horse who *would* dance on the pavement with a gig behind him, and who frightened her, and made her clasp his arm with both hands (both hands; meeting one upon the other, so endearingly!), and caused her to implore him to take refuge in the pastry-cook's; and afterwards to peep out at the door so shrinkingly; and then; looking at him with those eyes; to ask him was he sure—now was he sure—they might go safely on! Oh for a string of rampant horses! For a lion, for a bear, for a mad bull, for anything to bring the little hands together on his arm, again!

They talked, of course. They laughed of Tom, and all these changes, and the attachment Mr. Chuzzlewit had conceived for him, and the bright prospects he had in such a friend, and a great deal more

to the same purpose. The more they talked, the more afraid this fluttering little Ruth became of any pause; and sooner than have a pause she would say the same things over again; and if she hadn't courage or presence of mind enough for that (to say the truth she very seldom had), she was ten thousand times more charming and irresistible than she had been before,

"Martin will be married very soon now, I suppose?" said John.

She supposed he would. Never did a bewitching little woman suppose anything in such a faint voice as Ruth supposed that.

But feeling that another of those alarming pauses were approaching, she remarked that he would have a beautiful wife. Didn't Mr. Westlock think so?

"Ye—yes," said John, "oh, yes."

She feared he was rather hard to please—he spoke so coldly.

"Rather say already pleased," said John. "I have scarcely seen her. I had no care to see her. I had no eyes for *her*, this morning."

Oh, good gracious!

It was well they had reached their destination. She never could have gone any further. It would have been impossible to walk in such a tremble.

Tom had not come in. They entered the triangular parlor together, and alone. Fiery Face, Fiery Face how many years' purchase *now*!

She sat down on the little sofa, and untied her bonnet-strings. He sat down by her side, and very near her ; very, very near her. Oh, rapid, swelling, bursting little heart, you knew that it would come to this, and hoped it would. Why beat so wildly, heart!

"Dear Ruth! Sweet Ruth! If I had loved you less, I could have told you that I have loved you, long ago. I have loved you from the first. There never was a creature in the world more truly loved than you, dear Ruth, by me!"

She clasped her little hands before her face. The gushing tears of joy, and pride, and hope, and innocent affection, would not be restrained. Fresh from her full young heart they came to answer him.

"My dear love! If this is—I almost dare to hope it is, now—not painful or distressing to you, you make me happier than I can tell, or you imagine, Darling Ruth! My own good, gentle, winning Ruth! I hope I know the value of your heart, I hope I know the worth of your angel nature. Let me try and show you that I do ; and you will make me happier, Ruth——"

"Not happier," she sobbed, "than you make me. No one can be happier John, than you make me!"

Fiery Face, provide yourself! The usual wages or the usual warning. It's all over, Fiery Face. We needn't trouble you any further.

The little hands could meet each other now, with-

out a rampant horse to urge them. There was no occasion for lions, bears, or mad bulls. It could all be done, and infinitely better, without their assistance. No burly draymen or big butts of beer, were wanted for apologies. No apology at all was wanted. The soft light touch fell coyly, but quite naturally upon the lover's shoulder ; the delicate waist, the drooping head, the blushing cheek, the beautiful eyes, the exquisite mouth itself, were all as natural as possible. If all the horses in Araby had run away at once, they couldn't have improved upon it.

They soon began to talk of Tom again.

"I hope he will be glad to hear of it!" said John, with sparkling eyes.

Ruth drew the little hands a little tighter when he said it, and looked up seriously into his face.

"I am never to leave him, *am* I, dear? I could never leave Tom. I am sure you know that."

"Do you think I would ask you?" he returned, with a—well! Never mind with what.

"I am sure you never would," she answered, the bright tears standing in her eyes.

"And I will swear it, Ruth, my darling, if you please. Leave Tom! That would be a strange beginning. Leave Tom, dear! If Tom and we be not inseparable, and Tom (God bless him) have not all honor and all love in our home, my little wife, may

that home never be! And that's a strong oath, Ruth."

Shall it be recorded how she thanked him? Yes, it shall. In all simplicity and innocence and purity of heart, yet with a timid, graceful, half-determined hesitation, she set a little rosy seal upon the vow, whose color was reflecting in her face, and flashed up to the braiding of her dark brown hair.

"Tom will be so happy, and so proud, and glad," she said, clasping her little hands. "But so surprised! I am sure he has never thought of such a thing."

Of course John asked her immediately—because you know they were in that foolish state when great allowances must be made—when *she* had begun to think of such a thing, and this made a little diversion in their talk; a charming diversion to them, but not so interesting to us; at the end of which, they came to Tom again.

"Ah! dear Tom!" said Ruth. "I suppose I ought to tell you everything now. I should have no secrets from you. Should I, John, love?"

It is of no use saying how that preposterous John answered her, because he answered in a manner which is untranslatable on paper, though highly satisfactory in itself. But what he conveyed was, No, no, no, sweet Ruth; or something to that effect.

Then she told him Tom's great secret; not exactly

saying how she had found it out, but leaving him to understand it if he liked; and John was sadly grieved to hear it, and was full of sympathy and sorrow. But they would try, he said, only the more, on this account, to make him happy, and to beguile him with his favorite pursuits. And then, in all the confidence of such a time, he told her how he had a capital opportunity of establishing himself in his old profession in the country; and how he had been thinking, in the event of that happiness coming upon him which had actually come—there was another slight diversion here—how he had been thinking that it would afford occupation to Tom, and enable them to live together in the easiest manner, without any sense of dependence on Tom's part; and to be as happy as the day was long. And Ruth receiving this with joy, they went on catering for Tom to that extent that they had already purchased him a select library and built him an organ, on which he was performing with the greatest satisfaction; when they heard him knocking at the door.

Though she longed to tell him what had happened, poor little Ruth was greatly agitated by his arrival; the more so because she knew that Mr. Chuzzlewit was with him. So she said, all in a tremble:

"What shall I do, dear John! I can't bear that he should hear it from anyone but me, and I could not tell him, unless we were alone."

"Do, my love," said John, "whatever is natural to you on the impulse of the moment, and I am sure it will be right."

He had hardly time to say thus much, and Ruth had hardly time to—just to get a little farther off—upon the sofa, when Tom and Mr. Chuzzlewit came in. Mr. Chuzzlewit came first, and Tom was a few seconds behind him.

Now Ruth had resolved that she would beckon Tom up stairs after a short time, and would tell him in his little bedroom. But when she saw his dear old face come in, her heart was so touched that she ran into his arms, and laid her head down on his breast, and sobbed out, "Bless me, Tom! My dearest brother!"

Tom looked up, in surprise, and saw John Westlock close beside him, holding out his hand.

"John!" cried Tom. "John!"

"Dear Tom," said his friend, "give me your hand. We are brothers, Tom."

Tom wrung it with all his force, embraced his sister fervently, and put her in John Westlock's arms.

"Don't speak to me, John. Heaven is very good to us. I——" Tom could find no further utterance, but left the room; and Ruth went after him.

And when they came back, which they did by and by, she looked more beautiful, and Tom more good and true (if that were possible) than ever. And

though Tom could not speak upon the subject even now, being yet too newly glad, he put both his hands in both of John's with emphasis sufficient for the best speech ever spoken.

"I am glad you chose to-day," said Mr. Chuzzlewit to John, with the same knowing smile as when they had left him. "I thought you would. I hoped Tom and I lingered behind a discreet time. It's so long since I had any practical knowledge of these subjects, that I have been anxious, I assure you."

"Your knowledge is still pretty accurate, sir," returned John laughing, "if it lead you to foresee what would happen to-day."

"Why, I am not sure, Mr. Westlock," said the old man, "that any great spirit of prophecy was needed, after seeing you and Ruth together. Come hither, pretty one. See what Tom and I purchased this morning, while you were dealing in exchange with that young merchant there."

The old man's way of seating her beside him, and humoring his voice as if she were a child, was whimsical enough, but full of tenderness, and not ill adapted, somehow, to little Ruth.

"See here!" he said, taking a case from his pocket, "what a beautiful necklace. Ah! How it glitters! Earrings, too, and bracelets, and a zone for your waist. This set is yours, and Mary has another like it. Tom couldn't understand why I

wanted two. What a short-sighted Tom! Earrings and bracelets, and a zone for your waist! Ah! beautiful! Let us see how brave they look. Ask Mr. Westlock to clasp them on."

It was the prettiest thing to see her holding out her round, white arms; and John (oh deep, deep John!) pretending that the bracelet was very hard to fasten; it was the prettiest thing to see her girding on the precious little zone, and yet obliged to have assistance because her fingers were in such terrible perplexity; it was the prettiest thing to see her so confused and bashful, with the smiles and blushes playing brightly on her face, like the sparkling light upon the jewels; it was the prettiest thing that you would see, in the common experiences of a twelve-month, rely upon it.

"The set of jewels and the wearer are so well matched," said the old man, "that I don't know which becomes the other most. Mr. Westlock could tell me, I have no doubt, but I'll not ask him, for he is bribed. Health to wear them my dear, and happiness to make you forgetful of them, except as a remembrance from a loving friend!"

He patted her upon the cheek, and said to Tom:

"I must play the part of a father here, Tom, also. There are not many fathers who marry two such daughters on the same day; but we will overlook the improbability for the gratification of an old man's

fancy. I may claim that much indulgence," he added, "for I have gratified few fancies enough in my life tending to the happiness of others, Heaven knows!"

These various proceedings had occupied so much time, and they fell into such a pleasant conversation now, that it was within a quarter of an hour of the time appointed for dinner before any of them thought about it. A hackney-coach soon carried them to the Temple, however, and there they found everything prepared for their reception.

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But ah! the happiness of strolling home at night—obstinate little Ruth, she wouldn't hear of riding!—as they had done on that dear night, from Furnival's Inn! The happiness of being able to talk about it, and confide their happiness to each other! The happiness of stating all their little plans to Tom, and seeing his bright face grow brighter as they spoke!

When they reached home, Tom left John and his sister in the parlor, and went upstairs to his own room, under pretence of seeking a book. And Tom actually winked to himself, when he got up stairs, he thought it such a deep thing to have done.

"They liked to be by themselves, of course," said Tom; "and I came away so naturally, that I have no doubt they are expecting me, every moment, to return. That's capital!"

But he had not sat reading very long, when he heard a tap at his door.

"May I come in?" said John.

"Oh, surely!" Tom replied.

"Don't leave us, Tom. Don't sit by yourself. We want to make you merry; not melancholy."

"My dear friend," said Tom, with a cheerful smile.

"Brother, Tom. Brother."

"My dear brother," said Tom; "there is no danger of my being melancholy, when I know that you and Ruth are so blest in each other! I think I can find my tongue to-night, John," he added, after a moment's pause. "But I never can tell you what unutterable joy this day has given me. It would be unjust to you to speak of your having chosen a portionless girl, for I feel that you know her worth; I am sure you know her worth. Nor will it diminish in your estimation, John, which money might."

"Which money would, Tom," he returned. "Her worth? Oh, who could see her here, and not love her! Who could know her, Tom, and not honor her! Who could ever stand possessed of such a heart as hers, and grow indifferent to the treasure! Who could feel the rapture that I feel to-day, and love as I love her, Tom, without knowing something of her worth! Your joy unutterable! No, no, Tom. It's mine, it's mine."

"No, no, John," said Tom. "It's mine, it's mine."

Their friendly contention was brought to a close by little Ruth herself, who came peeping in at the door. And oh, the look, the glorious, half-proud, half-timid look she gave Tom, when her lover drew her to his side! As much as to say, "Yes indeed, Tom, he will do it. But then he has a right, you know. Because I *am* fond of him, Tom."

As to Tom, he was perfectly delighted. He could have sat and looked at them, just as they were, for hours.

"I have told Tom, love, as we agreed, that we are not going to permit him to run away, and that we cannot possibly allow it. The loss of one person, and such a person as Tom, too, out of our small household of three, is not to be endured; and so I have told him. Whether he is considerate, or whether he is only selfish, I don't know. But he needn't be considerate, for he is not the least restraint upon us. Is he, dearest Ruth?"

Well! He really did not seem to be any particular restraint upon them. Judging from what ensued.

Was it folly in Tom to be so pleased by their remembrance of him, at such a time? Was their graceful love a folly, were their dear caresses follies, was their lengthened parting folly? Was it

folly in him to watch her window from the street, and rate its scantiest gleam of light above all diamonds: folly in her to breathe his name upon her knees, and pour out her heart before that Being, from whom such hearts and such affections come?

If these be follies, then Fiery Face go on and prosper! If they be not, then Fiery Face avaunt! But set the crunched bonnet at some other single gentleman, in any case, for one is lost to thee for ever!

DOMBEY AND SON.

DOMBEY AND SON.

PAUL had never risen from his little bed. He lay there, listening to the noises in the street, quite tranquilly; not caring much how the time went, but watching it and watching everything about him with observing eyes.

When the sunbeams struck into his room through the rustling blinds, and quivered on the opposite wall like golden water, he knew that evening was coming on, and that the sky was red and beautiful. As the reflection died away, and a gleam went creeping up the wall, he watched it deepen, deepen, deepen, into night. Then he thought how the long streets were dotted with lamps, and how the peaceful stars were shining overhead. His fancy had a strange tendency to wander to the river, which he knew was flowing through the great city; and now he thought how black it was, and how deep it would look, reflecting the host of stars—and more than all, how steadily it rolled away to meet the sea.

As it grew later in the night, and footsteps in the street became so rare that he could hear them com-

ing, count them as they paused, and lose them in the hollow distance, he would lie and watch the many-colored ring about the candle, and wait patiently for day. His only trouble was the swift and rapid river. He felt forced, sometimes, to try to stop it—to stem it with his childish hands—or choke it away with sand—and when he saw it coming on, resistless, he cried out! But a word from Florence, who was always at his side, restored him to himself; and leaning his poor head upon her breast, he told Floy of his dream, and smiled.

When day began to dawn again, he watched for the sun; and when its cheerful light began to sparkle in the room, he pictured to himself—pictured! he saw—the high church towers rising up into the morning sky, the town reviving, waking, starting into life once more, the river glisteningas it rolled (but rolling fast as ever), and the country bright with dew. Familiar sounds and cries came by degrees into the streets below; the servants in the house were roused and busy; faces looked in at the door, and voices asked his attendants softly how he was. Paul always answered for himself, "I am better. I am a great deal better, thank you! Tell papa so!"

By little and little, he got tired of the bustle of the day, the noise of carriages and carts, and people passing and re-passing; and would fall asleep or be troubled with a restless and uneasy sense again—the

child could hardly tell whether this were in his sleeping or waking moments—of that rushing river. "Why, will it never stop, Floy?" he would sometimes ask her. "It is bearing me away, I think!"

But Floy could always soothe and re-assure him; and it was his daily delight to make her lay her head down on his pillow, and take some rest.

"You are always watching me, Floy. Let me watch *you*, now!" They would prop him up with cushions in a corner of his bed, and there he would recline the while she lay beside him: bending forward oftentimes to kiss her, and whispering to those who were near that she was tired, and how she had sat up so many nights beside him.

Thus the flush of the day, in its heat and light, would gradually decline; and again the golden water would be dancing on the wall.

He was visited by as many as three grave doctors —they used to assemble down-stairs, and come up together—and the room was so quiet, and Paul was so observant of them (though he never asked of anybody what they said), that he even knew the difference in the sound of their watches. But his interest centred in Sir Parker Peps, who always took his seat on the side of the bed. For Paul had heard them say long ago, that that gentleman had been with his mamma when she clasped Florence in her arms, and

died. And he could not forget it, now. He liked him for it. He was not afraid.

The people round him changed as unaccountably as on the first night at Dr. Blember's—except Florence; Florence never changed—and what had been Sir Parker Peps, was now his father, sitting with his head upon his hand. Old Mrs. Pipchin dozing in an easy chair, often changed to Miss Tox, or his aunt; and Paul was quite content to shut his eyes again, and see what happened next without emotion. But this figure with its head upon its hand returned so often, and remained so long, and sat so still and solemn, never speaking, never beings poken to, and rarely lifting up its face, that Paul began to wonder languidly, if it were real; and in the night-time saw it sitting there, with fear.

"Floy!" he said. "What *is* that?"

"Where, dearest?"

"There! at the bottom of the bed."

"There's nothing there, except papa!"

The figure lifted up its head, and rose, and coming to the bedside, said: "My own boy! Don't you know me?"

Paul looked it in the face, and thought, was this his father? But the face so altered to his thinking, thrilled while he gazed, as if it were in pain; and before he could reach out both his hands to take it between them, and draw it toward him, the figure

turned quickly from the little bed, and went out at the door.

Paul looked at Florence with fluttering heart, but he knew what she was going to say, and stopped her with his face against her lips. The next time he observed the figure sitting at the bottom of the bed, he called out to it.

"Don't be so sorry for me, dear papa! Indeed I am quite happy!"

His father coming and bending down to him—which he did quickly, and without first pausing by the bedside—Paul held him round the neck, and repeated these words to him several times, and very earnestly; and Paul never saw him in his room again at any time, whether it were day or night, but he called out, "Don't be so sorry for me! Indeed I am quite happy!" This was the beginning of his saying in the morning that he was a great deal better, and that they were to tell his father so.

How many times the golden water danced upon the wall; how many nights the dark river rolled toward the sea in spite of him; Paul never counted, never sought to know. If their kindness or his sense of it, could have increased, they were more kind, and he more grateful every day; but whether they were many days or few, appeared of little moment now, to the gentle boy.

One night he had been thinking of his mother,

and her picture in the drawing-room down stairs, and thought she must have loved sweet Florence better than his father did, to have held her in her arms when she felt that she was dying—for even he, her brother, who had such dear love for her, could have no greater wish than that. The train of thought suggested to him to inquire if he had ever seen his mother; for he could not remember whether they had told him, yes or no, the river running very fast, and confusing his mind.

"Floy, did I ever see mamma?"

"No, darling, why!"

"Did I ever see any kind face, like mamma's looking at me when I was a baby, Floy?"

He asked, incredulously, as if he had some vision of a face before him.

"Oh yes, dear!"

"Whose, Floy?"

"Your old nurse's. Often."

"And where is my old nurse?" said Paul. "Is she dead too? Floy, are we *all* dead, except you?"

There was a hurry in the room, for an instant—longer, perhaps; but it seemed no more—then all was still again; and Florence, with her face quite colorless, but smiling, held his head upon her arm. Her arm trembled very much.

"Show me that old nurse, Floy, if you please!"

"She is not here, darling. She shall come to-morrow."

"Thank you, Floy!"

Paul closed his eyes with those words, and fell asleep. When he awoke, the sun was high, and the broad day was clear and warm. He lay a little looking at the windows, which were open, and the curtains rustling in the air, and waving to and fro: then he said, "Floy, is it to-morrow? Is she come?"

Some one seemed to go in quest of her. Perhaps it was Susan. Paul thought he heard her telling him when he had closed his eyes again, that she would soon be back; but he did not open them to see. She kept her word—perhaps she had never been away—but the next thing that happened was a noise of footsteps on the stairs, and then Paul woke—woke mind and body—and sat upright in his bed. He saw them now about him. There was no gray mist before them, as there had been sometimes in the night. He knew them every one, and called them by their names.

"And who is this? Is this my old nurse?" said the child, regarding with a radiant smile, a figure coming in.

Yes, yes. No other stranger would have shed those tears at sight of him, and called him her dear boy, her pretty boy, her own poor blighted child. No other woman would have stooped down by his bed, and taken up his wasted hand, and put it to her lips and

breast, as one who had some right to fondle it. No other woman would have forgotten everybody there but him and Floy, and been so full of tenderness and pity.

"Floy! this is a kind good face!" said Paul. "I am glad to see it again. Don't go away old nurse! Stay here."

His senses were all quickened, and he heard a name he knew.

"Who was that, who said 'Walter?"' he asked, looking around. "Some one said Walter. Is he here? I should like to see him very much."

Nobody replied directly; but his father soon said to Susan, "Call him back, then: let him come up!" After a short pause of expectation, during which he looked with smiling interest and wonder, on his nurse, and saw that she had not forgotten Floy, Walter was brought into the room. His open face and manner, and his cheerful eyes, had always made him a favorite with Paul; and when Paul saw him, he stretched out his hand, and said "Good-by!"

"Good-by, my child!" cried Mrs. Pipchin hurrying to his bed's head, "Not good-by?"

For an instant, Paul looked at her with the wistful face with which he had so often gazed upon her in his corner by the fire. "Ah yes," he said placidly, "good-by! Walter dear, good-by!"—turning his head to where he stood, and putting out his hand again. "Where is papa?"

He felt his father's breath upon his cheek, before the words had parted from his lips.

"Remember Walter, dear papa," he whispered, looking in his face. "Remember Walter. I was fond of Walter!" The feeble hand waved in the air, as if it cried "good-by!" to Walter once again.

"Now lay me down," he said, "and Floy, come close to me, and let me see you!"

Sister and brother wound their arms around each other, and the golden light came streaming in, and fell upon them, locked together.

"How fast the river runs, between its green banks and the rushes, Floy! But 'tis very near the sea. I hear the waves! They always said so!"

Presently he told her that the motion of the boat upon the stream was lulling him to rest. How green the banks were now, how bright the flowers growing on them, and how tall the rushes! Now the boat was out at sea, but gliding smoothly on. And now there was a shore before him. He stood on the bank!——

He put his hands together, as he had been used to do at his prayers. He did not remove his arms to do it; but they saw him fold them so behind her neck.

"Mamma is like you, Floy. I know her by the face! But tell them that the print upon the stairs at school is not divine enough. The light about the head is shining on me as I go!"

The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion! The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion—Death!

Oh thank God, all who see it, for that older fashion yet, of Immortality! And look upon us, angels of young children, with regards not quite estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean!

OLIVER TWIST.

OLIVER TWIST.

IT was nearly two hours before daybreak; that time which in the autumn of the year, may be truly called the dead of night; when the streets are silent and deserted; when even sounds appear to slumber, and profligacy and riot have staggered home to dream; it was at this still and silent hour, that Fagin sat watching in his old lair, with face so distorted and pale, and eyes so red and bloodshot, that he looked less like a man, than like some hideous phantom, moist from the grave, and worried by an evil spirit.

He sat crouching over a cold hearth, wrapped in an old torn coverlet, with his face turned toward a wasting candle that stood upon a table by his side. His right hand was raised to his lips, and as, absorbed in thought, he bit his long black nails, he disclosed among his toothless gums a few such fangs as should have been a dog's or a rat's.

Stretched upon a mattress on the floor, lay Noah Claypole, fast asleep. Toward him the old man

sometimes directed his eyes for an instant, and then brought them back again to the candle; which with a long-burnt wick drooping almost double, and hot grease falling down in clots upon the table, plainly showed that his thoughts were busy elsewhere.

Indeed they were. Mortification at the overthrow of his notable scheme; hatred of the girl who had dared to palter with strangers; and utter distrust of the sincerity of her refusal to yield him up; bitter disappointment at the loss of his revenge on Sikes; the fear of detection, and ruin, and death; and a fierce and deadly rage kindled by all; these were the passionate considerations which, following close upon each other with rapid and ceaseless whirl, shot through the brain of Fagin, as every evil thought and blackest purpose lay working at his heart.

He sat without changing his attitude in the least, or appearing to take the smallest heed of time, until his quick ear seemed to be attracted by a footstep in the street.

"At last," he muttered, wiping his dry and fevered mouth. "At last!"

The bell rang gently as he spoke. He crept up stairs to the door, and presently returned accompanied by a man muffled to the chin, who carried a bundle under one arm. Sitting down and throwing back his outer coat, the man displayed the burly frame of Sikes.

"There!" he said, laying the bundle on the table. "Take care of that, and do the most you can with it. It's been trouble enough to get; I thought I should have been here three hours ago."

Fagin laid his hand upon the bundle, and locking it in the cupboard, sat down again without speaking. But he did not take his eyes off the robber for an instant, during this action; and now that they sat over against each other, face to face, he looked fixedly at him, with his lips quivering so violently, and his face so altered by the emotions which had mastered him, that the housebreaker involuntarily drew back his chair, and surveyed him with a look of real affright.

"Wot now?" cried Sikes. "Wot do you look at a man so for?"

Fagin raised his right hand, and shook his trembling forefinger in the air; but his passion was so great, that the power of speech was for the moment gone.

"Damme!" said Sikes, feeling in his breast with a look of alarm. "He's gone mad. I must look to myself here."

"No, no," rejoined Fagin, finding his voice. "It's not—you're not the person, Bill. I've no—no fault to find with you."

"Oh, you haven't, haven't you?" said Sikes, looking sternly at him, and ostentatiously passing a pistol into a more convenient pocket. "That's luck—for one of us. Which one that is, don't matter."

"I've got that to tell you, Bill," said Fagin, drawing his chair nearer, "will make you worse than me."

"Ay?" returned the robber with an incredulous air. "Tell away! Look sharp, or Nance will think I'm lost."

"Lost!" cried Fagin. "She has pretty well settled that, in her own mind, already."

Sikes looked with an aspect of great perplexity into the Jew's face, and reading no satisfactory explanation of the riddle there, clenched his coat collar in his huge hand and shook him soundly.

"Speak, will you!" he said; "or if you don't, it shall be for want of breath. Open your mouth and say wot you've got to say in plain words. Out with it, you thundering old cur, out with it!"

"Suppose that lad that's lying there———" Fagin began.

Sikes turned round to where Noah was sleeping, as if he had not previously observed him. "Well!" he said, resuming his former position.

"Suppose that lad," pursued Fagin, "was to peach —to blow upon us all—first seeking out the right folks for the purpose, and then having a meeting with 'em in the street to paint our likenesses, describe every mark that they might know us by, and the crib where we might be most easily taken. Suppose he were to do all this, and besides to blow upon a plant we've all been in, more or less—of his

own fancy; not grabbed, trapped, tried, earwigged by the parson and brought to it on bread and water, —but of his own fancy; to please his own taste; stealing out at nights to find those most interested against us, and peaching to them. Do you hear me?" cried the Jew, his eyes flashing with rage. "Suppose he did all this, what then?"

"What then!" replied Sikes; with a tremendous oath. "If he was left alive till I came, I'd grind his skull under the iron heel of my boot into as many grains as there are hairs upon his head."

"What if *I* did it!" cried Fagin almost in a yell. "*I*, that know so much, and could hang so many besides myself!"

"I don't know," replied Sikes, clenching his teeth and turning white at the mere suggestion. "I'd do something in the jail that 'ud get me put in irons: and if I was tried along with you, I'd fall upon you with them in the open court, and beat your brains out afore the people. I should have such strength," muttered the robber, poising his brawny arm, "that I could smash your head as if a loaded wagon had gone over it."

"You would?"

"Would I!" said the housebreaker. "Try me."

"If it was Charley, or the Dodger, or Bet, or——"

"I don't care who," replied Sikes impatiently. "Whoever it was, I'd serve them the same."

Fagin looked hard at the robber; and, motioning him to be silent, stooped over the bed upon the floor, and shook the sleeper to rouse him. Sikes leant forward in his chair: looking on with his hands upon his knees, as if wondering much what all this questioning and preparation was to end in.

"Bolter, Bolter! Poor lad!" said Fagin, looking up with an expression of devilish anticipation, and speaking slowly and with marked emphasis. "He's tired—tired with watching for *her* so long,—watching for *her*, Bill."

"Wot d'ye mean?" asked Sikes, drawing back.

Fagin made no answer, but bending over the sleeper again, hauled him into a sitting posture. When his assumed name had been repeated several times, Noah rubbed his eyes, and, giving a heavy, yawn, looked sleepily about him.

"Tell me that again—once again, just for him to hear," said the Jew, pointing to Sikes as he spoke.

"Tell yer what?" asked the sleepy Noah, shaking himself pettishly.

"That about—NANCY," said Fagin, clutching Sikes by the wrist, as if to prevent his leaving the house before he had heard enough. "You followed her?"

"Yes."

"To London Bridge?"

"Yes."

"Where she met two people?"

"So she did."

"A gentleman and a lady that she had gone to of her own accord before, who asked her to give up all her pals, and Monks first, which she did—and to describe him, which she did—and to tell her what house it was that we meet at, and go to, which she did—and where it could be best watched from, which she did—and what time the people went there, which she did. She did all this. She told it all, every word without a threat, without a murmur—she did—did she not?" cried Fagin, half mad with fury.

"All right," replied Noah, scratching his head. "That's just what it was!"

"What did they say, about last Sunday?"

"About last Sunday!" replied Noah, considering. "Why I told yer that before."

"Again. Tell it again!" cried Fagin, tightening his grasp on Sikes, and brandishing his other hand aloft, as the foam flew from his lips.

"They asked her," said Noah, who, as he grew more wakeful, seemed to have a dawning perception who Sikes was, "they asked her why she didn't come, last Sunday, as she promised. She said she couldn't."

"Why—why? Tell him that."

"Because she was forcibly kept at home by Bill, the man she had told them of before," replied Noah.

"What more of him?" cried Fagin. "What more

of the man she had told them of before! Tell him that, tell him that."

"Why, that she couldn't very easily get out of doors unless he knew where she was going to," said Noah; "and so the first time she went to see the lady, she—ha! ha! ha! it made me laugh when she said it, that it did—she gave him a drink of laudanum!"

"Hell's fire!" cried Sikes, breaking fiercely from the Jew. "Let me go!"

Flinging the old man from him, he rushed from the room, and darted, wildly and furiously, up the stairs.

"Bill, Bill!" cried Fagin, following him hastily. "A word. Only a word."

The word would not have been exchanged, but that the housebreaker was unable to open the door: on which he was expending fruitless oaths and violence, when the Jew came panting up.

"Let me out," said Sikes. "Don't speak to me; it's not safe. Let me out, I say!"

"Hear me speak a word," rejoined Fagin, laying his hand upon the lock. "You won't be——"

"Well," replied the other.

"You won't be—too—violent, Bill?"

The day was breaking, and there was light enough for the men to see each other's faces. They exchanged one brief glance; there was a fire in the eyes of both, which could not be mistaken.

"I mean," said Fagin, showing that he felt all disguise was now useless, "not too violent for safety. Be crafty, Bill, and not too bold."

Sikes made no reply; but, pulling open the door, of which Fagin had turned the lock, dashed into the silent streets.

Without one pause, or moment's consideration; without once turning his head to the right or left, or raising his eyes to the sky, or lowering them to the ground, but looking straight before him with savage resolution: his teeth so tightly compressed that the strained jaw seemed starting through his skin; the robber held on his headlong course, nor muttered a word, nor relaxed a muscle, until he reached his own door. He opened it, softly, with a key; strode lightly up the stairs; and entering his own room, double-locked the door, and lifting a heavy table against it, drew back the curtain of the bed.

The girl was lying, half-dressed, upon it. He had roused her from her sleep, for she raised herself with a hurried and startled look.

"Get up!" said the man.

"It *is* you, Bill!' said the girl, with an expression of pleasure at his return.

"It is," was the reply. "Get up."

There was a candle burning, but the man hastily drew it from the candle-stick, and hurled it under the grate. Seeing the faint light of early day without, the girl rose to undraw the curtain.

"Let it be," said Sikes. thrusting his hand before her. "There's light enough for wot I've got to do."

"Bill," said the girl, in the low voice of alarm, "why do you look like that at me!"

The robber sat regarding her, for a few seconds, with dilated nostrils and heaving breast; and then, grasping her by the head and throat, dragged her into the middle of the room, and looking once toward the door, placed his heavy hand upon her mouth.

"Bill, Bill!" gasped the girl, wrestling with the strength of mortal fear,—"I—I won't scream or cry —not once—hear me—speak to me—tell me what I have done!"

"You know, you she devil!" returned the robber, suppressing his breath. "You were watched to-night: every word you said was heard."

"Then spare my life for the love of Heaven, as I spared yours," rejoined the girl, clinging to him. "Bill, dear Bill, you cannot have the heart to kill me. Oh! think of all I have given up, only this one night, for you. You *shall* have time to think, and save yourself this crime; I will not loose my hold, you cannot throw me off. Bill, Bill, for dear God's sake, for your own, for mine, stop before you spill my blood! I have been true to you, upon my guilty soul I have!"

The man struggled violently, to release his arms; but those of the girl were clasped round his, and tear her as he would, he could not tear them away.

"Bill," cried the girl striving to lay her head upon his breast, "the gentleman and that dear lady, told me to-night of a home in some foreign country where I could end my days in solitude and peace. Let me see them again, and beg them, on my knees, to show the same mercy and goodness to you; and let us both leave this dreadful place, and far apart lead better lives, and forget how we have lived, except in prayers, and never see each other more. It is never too late to repent. They told me so—I feel it now—but we must have time—a little, little time!"

The house-breaker freed one arm, and grasped his pistol. The certainty of immediate detection if he fired, flashed across his mind even in the midst of his fury; and he beat it twice with all the force he could summon, upon the upturned face that almost touched his own.

She staggered and fell: nearly blinded with the blood that rained down from a deep gash in her forehead; but raising herself, with difficulty, on her knees, drew from her bosom a white handkerchief, holding it up, in her folded hands, as high toward Heaven as her feeble strength would allow, breathed one prayer for mercy to her maker.

It was a ghastly figure to look upon. The murderer staggering backward to the wall, and shutting out the sight with his hand, seized a heavy club and struck her down.

. . . . . .

Of all bad deeds that, under cover of the darkness, had been committed within wide London's bounds since night hung over it, that was the worst. Of all the horrors that rose with an ill scent upon the morning air, that was the foulest and most cruel.

The sun—the bright sun, that brings back, not light alone, but new life, and hope, and freshness to man—burst upon the crowded city in clear and radiant glory. Through costly-colored glass and paper-mended window, through cathedral dome and rotten crevice, it shed its equal ray. It lightened up the room where the murdered woman lay. It did. He tried to shut it out, but it would stream in. If the sight had been a ghastly one in the dull morning, what was it, now, in all that brilliant light!

He had not moved; he had been afraid to stir. There had been a moan and a motion of the hand; and, with terror added to rage, he had struck and struck again. Once he threw a rug over it; but it was worse to fancy the eyes, and imagine them moving toward him, than to see them glaring upward, as if watching the reflection of the pool of gore that quivered and danced in the sunlight on the ceiling. He had plucked it off again. And there was the body—mere flesh and blood, no more—but such flesh, and so much blood!

He struck a light, kindled a fire, and thrust the club into it. There was hair upon the end, which

blazed and shruuk into a light cinder, and, caught by the air, whirled up the chimney, Even that frightened him, sturdy as he was; but he held the weapon till it broke, and then piled it on the coals to burn away, and smoulder into ashes. He washed himself, and rubbed his clothes; there were spots that would not be removed, but he cut the pieces out, and burnt them. How those stains were dispersed about the room! The very feet of the dog were bloody.

All this time he had, never once, turned his back upon the corpse; no not for a moment. Such preparations completed, he moved, backward, toward the door: dragging the dog with him, lest he should soil his feet anew and carry out new evidences of the crime into the streets. He shut the door softly, locked it, took the key, and left the house.

He crossed over, and glanced up at the window, to be sure that nothing was visible from the outside. There was the curtain still drawn, which she would have opened, to admit the light she never saw again. It lay nearly under there. *He* knew that. God, how the sun poured down upon the very spot!

The glance was instantaneous. It was a relief to have got free of the room. He whistled on the dog, and walked rapidly away.

He went through Islington; strode up the hill at Highgate on which stands the stone in honor of

Whittington; turned down to Highgate Hill, unsteady of purpose, and uncertain where to go; he struck off to the right again, almost as soon as he began to descend it; and taking the foot-path across the fields, skirted Caen Wood, and so came out on Hampstead Heath. Traversing the hollow by the Vale of Heath, he mounted the opposite bank, and crossing the road which joins the villages of Hampstead and Highgate, made along the remaining portion of the heath to the fields at North End, in one of which he laid himself down under a hedge, and slept.

Soon he was up again, and away,—not far into the country, but back towards London by the high-road —then back again—then over another part of the same ground as he already traversed—then wandering up and down in fields, and lying on ditches' brinks to rest, and starting up to make for some other spot, and do the same, and ramble on again.

Where could he go, that was near and not too public, to get some meat and drink? Hendon. That was a good place, not far off, and out of most people's way. Thither he directed his steps,—running sometimes, and sometimes, with a strange perversity, loitering at a snail's pace, or stopping altogether and idly breaking the hedges with his stick. But when he got there, all the people he met—the very children at the doors—seemed to view him with suspicion. Back he turned again, without the cour-

Dickens.

BILL SIKES.

age to purchase bit or drop, though he had tasted no food for many hours; and once more he lingered on the Heath, uncertain where to go.

He wandered over miles and miles of ground, and still came back to the old place. Morning and noon had passed, and the day was on the wane, and still he rambled to and fro, and up and down, and round and round, and still lingered about the same spot. At last he got away, and shaped his course for Hatfield.

It was nine o'clock at night, when the man, quite tired out, and the dog, limping and lame from the unaccustomed exercise, turned down the hill by the church of the quiet village, and plodding along the little street, crept into a small public-house, whose scanty light had guided them to the spot. There was a fire in the tap-room, and some country laborers were drinking before it. They made room for the stranger, but he sat down in the furthest corner and ate and drank alone, or rather with his dog; to whom he cast a morsel of food from time to time.

The conversation of the men assembled here, turned upon the neighboring land, and farmers; and when those topics were exhausted, upon the age of some old man who had been buried on the previous Sunday; the young men present considering him very old, and the old men present declaring him to have been quite young—not older, one white-haired

grandfather said, than he was—with ten or fifteen years of life in him at least—if he had taken care; if he had taken care.

There was nothing to attract attention, or excite alarm in this. The robber, after paying his reckoning, sat silent and unnoticed in his corner, and had almost dropped asleep, when, he was half awakened by the noisy entrance of a new-comer.

This was an antic fellow, half pedlar and half mountebank, who travelled about the country on foot to vend hones, strops, razors, washballs, harness paste, medicine for dogs and horses, cheap perfumery, cosmetics, and such like wares, which he carried in a case slung to his back. His entrance was the signal for various homely jokes with the countrymen which slackened not until he had made his supper, and opened his box of treasures, when he ingeniously contrived to unite business with amusement.

"And what be that stoof? Good to eat, Harry?" asked a grinning countryman, pointing to some composition cakes in one corner.

"This," said the fellow, producing one, "this is the infallible and invaluable composition for removing all sorts of stain, rust, dirt, mildew, spick, speck, spot, or spatter, from silk, satin, linen, cambric, cloth, crape, stuff, carpet, merino, muslin, bombazeen, or woolen stuff. Wine-stains, fruit-stains, water-stains, beer-stains, paint-stains, pitch-stains, any stains, all

come out at one rub with the infallible and invaluable compostion. If a lady stains her honor, she has only need to swallow one cake and she's cured at once —for it's poison. If a gentleman wants to prove this he has only need to bolt one little square, and he has put it beyond question—for it's quite as satisfactory as a pistol bullet, and a great deal nastier in the flavor, consequently the more credit in taking it. One penny a square. With all these virtues, one penny a square!"

There were two buyers directly, and more of the listeners plainly hesitated. The vendor observing this increased in loquacity.

"It's all bought up as fast as it can be made," said the fellow. "There are fourteen water-mills, six steam-engines, and a galvanic battery, always a-working upon it, and they can't make it fast enough, though the men work so hard that they die off, and the widows is pensioned directly, with twenty pound a-year for each of the children, and a premium of fifty for twins. One penny a square! Two halfpence is all the same, and four farthings is received with joy. One penny a square! Wine-stains, fruit-stains, beer-stains, water-stains, paint-stains, pitch-stains, mud-stains, blood-stains! Here is a stain upon the hat of a gentleman in company, that I'll take clean out, before he can order me a pint of ale."

"Hah!" cried Sikes starting up. "Give that back."

"I'll take it clean out, sir," replied the man, winking to the company, "before you can come across the room to get it. Gentlemen all, observe the dark stain upon this gentleman's hat, no wider than a shilling, but thicker than a half-crown. Whether it is a wine-stain, fruit-stain, beer-stain, water-stain, paint-stain, pitch-stain, mud-stain, or blood-stain ——"

The man got no further, for Sikes with a hideous imprecation overthrew the table, and tearing the hat from him, burst out of the house.

With the same perversity of feeling and irresolution that had fastened upon him, despite himself, all day, the murderer finding that he was not followed, and that they most probably considered him some drunken sullen fellow, turned back upon the town, and getting out of the glare of the lamps of a stage-coach that was standing in the street, was walking past, when he recognized the mail from London, and saw that it was standing at the little post-office. He almost knew what was to come; but he crossed over, and listened.

The guard was standing at the door, waiting for the letter-bag. A man dressed like a gamekeeper, came up at the moment, and he handed him a basket which lay ready on the pavement.

"That's for your people," said the guard. "Now, look alive in there, will you. Damn that 'er bag, it

warn't ready night afore last; this won't do, you know!"

"Anything new up in town, Ben?" asked the gamekeeper, drawing back to the window-shutters, the better to admire the horses.

"No, nothing that I knows on," replied the man, pulling on his gloves. "Corn's up a little. I heerd talk of a murder too, down Spitefields way, but I don't reckon much upon it."

"Oh, that's quite true," said a gentleman inside, who was looking out of the window. "And a dreadful murder it was."

"Was it, sir?" rejoined the guard, touching his hat. "Man or woman, pray, sir?"

"A woman," replied the gentleman. "It is supposed——"

"Now, Ben," replied the coachman impatiently.

"Damn that 'ere bag," said the guard: "are you gone to sleep in there?"

"Coming!" cried the office keeper, running out.

"Coming," growled the guard. "Ah, and so's the young 'ooman of property that's going to take a fancy to me, but I don't know when. Here, give hold. All ri—ight!"

The horn sounded a few cheerful notes, and the coach was gone.

Sikes remained standing in the street, apparently unmoved by what he had just heard, and agitated

by no stronger feeling than a doubt where to go. At length he went back again, and took the road which leads from Hatfield to St. Albans.

He went on doggedly ; but as he left the town behind him, and plunged into the solitude and darkness of the road, he felt a dread and awe creeping upon him which shook him to the core. Every object before him, substance or shadow, still or moving, took the semblance of some fearful thing ; but these fears were nothing compared to the sense that haunted him of that morning's ghastly figure following at his heels. He could trace its shadow in the gloom, supply the smallest item of the outline, and note how stiff and solemn it seemed to stalk along. He could hear its garments rustling in the leaves, and every breath of wind came laden with that last low cry. If he stopped it did the same. If he ran, it followed—not running too ; that would have been a relief ; but like a corpse endowed with the mere machinery of life, and borne on one slow melancholy wind that never rose or fell.

At times, he turned. with desperate determination, resolved to beat this phantom off, though it should look him dead ; but the hair rose on his head, and his blood stood still, for it had turned with him and was behind him then. He had kept it before him that morning, but it was behind now--always. He leaned his back against a bank, and felt that it stood above him, visibly out against the cold night-

sky. He threw himself upon the road—on his back upon the road. At his head it stood, silent, erect, and still—a living grave-stone, with its epitaph in blood.

Let no man talk of murderers escaping justice, and hint that Providence must sleep. There were twenty score of violent deaths in one long minute of that agony of fear.

There was a shed in a field that he passed, that offered shelter for the night. Before the door, were three tall poplar trees, which made it very dark within; and the wind moaned through them with a dismal wail. He *could not* walk on, till daylight came again; and here he stretched himself close to the wall—to undergo new torture.

For now a vision came before him, as constant and more terrible than that from which he had escaped. Those widely staring eyes, so lustreless and so glassy, that he had better borne to see them than think upon them, appeared in the midst of the darkness: light in themselves, but giving light to nothing. There were but two, but they were everywhere. If he shut out the sight, there came the room with every well-known object—some, indeed, that he would have forgotten, if he had gone over its contents from memory—each in its accustomed place. The body was in *its* place., and its eyes were as he saw them when he stole away. He got up, and rushed into the field without. The figure was behind him. He

re-entered the shed, and shrunk down once more. The eyes were there, before he had laid himself long.

And here he remained in such terror as none but he can know, trembling in every limb, and the cold sweat starting from every pore, when suddenly there arose upon the night-wind the noise of distant shouting, and the roar of voices mingled in alarm and wonder. Any sound of men in that lonely place, even though it conveyed a real cause of alarm, was something to him. He regained his strength and energy at the prospect of personal danger; and springing to his feet, he rushed into the open air.

The broad sky seemed on fire. Rising into the air with showers of sparks, and rolling one above the other, were sheets of flame, lighting the atmosphere for miles round, and driving clouds of smoke in the direction where he stood. The shouts grew louder as new voices swelled the roar, and he could hear the cry of Fire! mingled with the ringing of an alarm-bell, the fall of heavy bodies, and the crackling of flames as they twined round some new obstacle, and shot aloft as though refreshed by food. The noise increased as he looked. There were people there—men and women—light, bustle. It was like new life to him. He darted onward—straight, headlong—dashing through brier and brake, and leaping gate and fence as madly as his dog, who careered with loud and sounding bark before him.

He came upon the spot. There were half-dressed figures tearing to and fro, some endeavoring to drag the frightened horses from the stables, others driving the cattle from the yard and out-houses, and others coming laden from the burning pile, amidst a shower of falling sparks, and the tumbling down of red-hot beams. The apertures, where doors and windows stood an hour ago, disclosed a mass of raging fire, walls rocked and crumbled into the burning well; the molten lead and iron poured down, white hot upon the ground. Women and children shrieked, and men encouraged each other with noisy shouts and cheers. The clanking of the engine-pumps, and the spirting and hissing of the water as it fell upon the blazing wood, added to the tremendous roar. He shouted, too, till he was hoarse; and flying from memory and himself, plunged into the thickest of the throng.

Hither and thither he dived that night: now working at the pumps, and now hurrying through the smoke and flame, but never ceasing to engage himself wherever noise and men were thickest. Up and down the ladders, upon the roofs of buildings, over floors that quaked and trembled with his weight, under the lee of falling bricks and stones, in every part of that great fire was he; but he bore a charmed life, and had neither scratch nor bruise, nor weariness nor thought, till morning dawned again, and only smoke and blackened ruins remained.

This mad excitement over, there returned, with tenfold force, the dreadful consciousness of his crime. He looked suspiciously about him, for the men were conversing in groups, and he feared to be the subject of their talk. The dog obeyed the significant beck of his finger, and they drew off, stealthily, together. He passed near an engine, where some men were seated, and they called to him to share in their refreshment. He took some bread and meat, and as he drank a draught of beer, heard the firemen, who were from London, talking about the murder. "He has gone to Birmingham, they say," said one: "but they'll have him yet, for the scouts are out, and by to-morrow night there'll be a cry all through the country."

He hurried off, and walked till he almost dropped upon the ground; then lay down in a lane, and had a long, but broken and uneasy sleep. He wandered on again, irresolute and undecided, and oppressed with the fear of another solitary night.

Suddenly, he took the desperate resolution of going back to London.

"There's somebody to speak to there, at all events," he thought. "A good hiding-place, too. They'll never expect to nab me there, after this country scent. Why can't I lie by for a week or so, and forcing blunt from Fagin, get abroad to France? Damme, I'll risk it."

He acted upon this impulse without delay, and choosing the least frequented roads began his journey back, resolved to lie concealed within a short distance of the metropolis, and, entering it at dusk by a circuitous route. to proceed straight to that part of it which he had fixed on for his destination.

The dog, though. If any description of him were out, it would not be forgotten that the dog was missing, and had probably gone with him. This might lead to his apprehension as he passed along the streets. He resolved to drown him, and walked on, looking about for a pond: picking up a heavy stone and tying it to his handkerchief as he went.

The animal looked up into his master's face while these preparations were making; whether his instinct apprehended something of their purpose, or the robber's sidelong look at him was sterner than ordinary, he skulked a little farther in the rear than usual, and cowered as he came more slowly along. When his master halted at the brink of a pool, and looked round to call him, he stopped outright.

"Do you hear me call? Come here?" cried Sikes.

The animal came up from the very force of habit; but as Sikes stooped to attach the handkerchief to his throat, he uttered a low growl and started back.

"Come back!" said the robber.

The dog wagged his tail, but moved not. Sikes made a running noose and called him again.

The dog advanced, retreated, paused an instant, turned, and scoured away at his hardest speed.

The man whistled again and again, and sat down and waited in the expectation that he would return. But no dog appeared, and at length he resumed his journey.

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Near to that part of the Thames on which the church at Rotherhithe abuts, where the buildings on the banks are dirtiest and the vessels on the river blackest with the dust of colliers and the smoke of close-built low-roofed houses, there exists the filthiest, the strangest, the most extraordinary of the many localities that are hidden in London, wholly unknown, even by name, to the great mass of its inhabitants.

To reach this place, the visitor has to penetrate through a maze of close, narrow, and muddy streets, thronged by the roughest and poorest of waterside people, and devoted to the traffic they may be supposed to occasion. The cheapest and least delicate provisions are heaped in the shops; the coarsest and commonest articles of wearing apparel dangle at the salesman's door, and stream from the house parapet and windows. Jostling with unemployed laborers of the lowest class, ballast-heavers, coal-whippers, brazen women, ragged children, and the raff and refuse

of the river, he makes his way with difficulty along, assailed by offensive sights and smells from the narrow alleys which branch off on the right and left, and deafened by the clash of ponderous wagons that bear great piles of merchandise from the stacks of warehouses that rise from every corner. Arriving, at length, in streets remoter and less frequented than those through which he has passed: he walks beneath tottering house fronts projecting over the pavement, dismantled walls that seem to totter as he passes, chimneys half crushed half hesitating to fall, windows guarded by rusty iron bars that time and dirt have almost eaten away, every imaginable sign of desolation and neglect.

In such a neighborhood, beyond Dockhead in the Borough of Southwark, stands Jacob's Island, surrounded by a muddy ditch, six or eight feet deep and fifteen or twenty wide when the tide is in, once called Mill Pond, but known in the days of this story as Folly Ditch. It is a creek or inlet from the Thames, and can always be filled at high water by opening the sluices at the Lead Mills from which it took its old name. At such times, a stranger, looking from one of the wooden bridges thrown across it at Mill Lane, will see the inhabitants of the houses on either side lowering from their back doors and windows, buckets, pails and domestic utensils of all kinds, in which to haul the water up; and when his

eye is turned from these operations to the houses themselves, his utmost astonishment will be excited by the scene before him. Crazy wooden galleries common to the backs of half a dozen houses, with holes from which to look upon the slime beneath; windows, broken and patched, with poles thrust out, on which to dry the linen that is never there; rooms so small, so filthy, so confined, that the air would seem too tainted even for the dirt and squalor which they shelter; wooden chambers thrusting themselves out above the mud, and threatening to fall into it—as some have done; dirt-besmeared walls and decaying foundations; every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot and garbage; all these ornament the banks of Folly Ditch.

In Jacob's Island, the warehouses are roofless and empty; the walls are crumbling down; the windows are windows no more; the doors are falling into the streets; the chimneys are blackened, but they yield no smoke. Thirty or forty years ago, before losses and chancery suits came upon it, it was a thriving place; but now it is a desolate island indeed. The houses have no owners; they are broken open, and entered upon by those who have the courage; and there they live, and there they die. They must have powerful motives for a secret residence, or be reduced to a destitute condition indeed, who seek a refuge in Jacob's Island.

In an upper room of one of these houses—a detached house of fair size, ruinous in other respects, but strongly defended at door and window: of which house the back commanded the ditch in manner already described—there were assembled three men, who, regarding each other every now and then with looks expressive of perplexity and expectation, sat for some time in profound and gloomy silence. One of these was Toby Crackit, another Mr. Chitling, and the third a robber of fifty years, whose nose had been almost beaten in, in some old scuffle, and whose face bore a frightful scar which might probably be traced to the same occasion. This man was a returned transport, and his name was Kags.

"I wish," said Toby turning to Mr. Chitling, "that you had picked out some other crib when the two old ones got too warm, and had not come here, my fine feller."

"Who didn't, you blunder-head!" said Kags.

"Well, I thought you'd have been a little more glad to see me than this," replied Mr. Chitling, with a melancholy air.

"Why look'e, young gentleman," said Toby, "when a man keeps himself so very ex-clusive as I have done, and by that means has a snug house over his head with nobody a prying and smelling about it, it's rather a startling thing to have the honor of a wisit from a young gentleman (however respect-

able and pleasant a person he may be to play cards with at convenience) circumstanced as you are."

"Especially when the exclusive young man has got a friend stopping with him, that's arrived sooner than was expected from foreign parts, and is too modest to want to be presented to the Judges on his return," added Mr. Kags.

There was a short silence, after which Toby Crackit, seeming to abandon as hopeless any further effort to maintain his usual devil-may-care swagger, turned to Chitling and said,

"When was Fagin took then?"

"Just at dinner-time—two o'clock this afternoon. Charley and I made our lucky up the wash'us chimney, and Bolter got into the empty water-butt, head downwards; but his legs were so precious long that they stuck out at the top, and so they took him too."

"And Bet?"

"Poor Bet! She went to see the Body, to speak to who it was," replied Chitling, his countenance falling more and more, "and went off mad, screaming and raving, and beating her head against the boards; so they put a strait-weskut on her and took her to the hospital—and there she is."

"Wot's come of young Bates?" demanded Kags.

"He hung about, not to come over here afore dark, but he'll be here soon," replied Chitling. "There's nowhere else to go to now, for the people

at the Cripples are all in custody, and the bar of the ken—I went up there and see it with my own eyes—is filled with traps."

"This is a smash," observed Toby biting his lips. "There's more than one will go with this."

"The sessions are on," said Kags; "if they get the inquest over, and Bolter turns King's evidence; as of course he will, from what he's said already: they can prove Fagin an accessory before the fact, and get the trial on on Friday, and he'll swing in six days from this, by G—!"

"You should have heard the people groan," said Chitling; "the officers fought like devils, or they'd have torn him away. He was down once, but they made a ring round him, and fought their way along. You should have seen how he looked about him, all muddy and bleeding, and clung to them as if they were his dearest friends. I can see 'em now, not able to stand upright with the pressing of the mob, and dragging him along amongst 'em; I can see the people jumping up, one behind another, and snarling with their teeth and making at him; I can see the blood upon his hair and beard, and hear the cries with which the women worked themselves into the centre of the crowd at the street corner, and swore they'd tear his heart out!"

The horror-stricken witness of this scene pressed his hands upon his ears, and with his eyes closed got

up and paced violently to and fro, like one distracted.

While he was thus engaged, and the two men sat by in silence with their eyes fixed upon the floor, a pattering noise was heard upon the stairs, and Sikes's dog bounded into the room. They ran to the window, down stairs, and into the street. The dog had jumped in at an open window; he made no attempt to follow them, nor was his master to be seen.

"What's the meaning of this?" said Toby when they had returned. "He can't be coming here. I —I—hope not."

"If he was coming here, he'd have come with the dog," said Kags, stooping down to examine the animal, who lay panting on the floor. "Here! Give us some water for him; he has run himself faint."

"He's drunk it all up, every drop," said Chitling after watching the dog some time in silence. "Covered with mud—lame—half-blind—he must have come a long way."

"Where can he have come from!" exclaimed Toby.

"He's been to the other kens of course, and finding them filled with strangers come on here, where he's been many a time and often. But where can he have come from first, and how comes he here alone without the other!"

"He"—(none of them called the murderer by his

old name)—"He can't have made away with himself. What do you think?" said Chitling.

Toby shook his head.

"If he had," said Kags, "the dog 'ud want to lead us away to where he did it. No. I think he's got out of the country and left the dog behind. He must have given him the slip somehow, or he wouldn't be so easy."

This solution, appearing the most probable one, was adopted as the right; the dog, creeping under a chair, coiled himself up to sleep, without more notice from anybody.

It being now dark, the shutter was closed, and a candle lighted and placed upon the table. The terrible events of the last two days had made a deep impression on all three, increased by the danger and uncertainty of their own position. They drew their chairs closer together, starting at every sound. They spoke little, and that in whispers, and were as silent and awe-stricken as if the remains of the murdered woman lay in the next room.

They had sat thus, some time, when suddenly was heard a hurried knocking at the door below.

"Young Bates," said Kags, looking angrily round, to check the fear he felt himself.

The knocking came again. No, it wasn't he. He never knocked like that.

Crackit went to the window, and shaking all over,

drew in his head. There was no need to tell them who it was, his pale face was enough. The dog too was on the alert in an instant, and ran whining to the door.

"We must let him in," he said, taking up the candle.

"Isn't there any help for it?" asked the other man in a hoarse voice.

"None. He *must* come in."

"Don't leave us in the dark," said Kags, taking down a candle from the chimney-piece, and lighting it, with such a trembling hand that the knocking was twice repeated before he had finished.

Crackit went down to the door, and returned followed by a man with the lower part of his face buried in a handkerchief, and another tied over his head under his hat. He drew them slowly off. Blanched face, sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, beard of three days' growth, wasted flesh, short thick breath; it was the very ghost of Sikes.

He laid his hand upon a chair which stood in the middle of the room, but shuddering as he was about to drop into it, and seeming to glance over his shoulder, dragged it back close to the wall—as close as it would go—ground it against it—and sat down.

Not a word had been exchanged. He looked from one to another in silence. If an eye were furtively raised and met his, it was instantly averted. When his hollow voice broke silence, they all three

started. They seemed never to have heard its tones before.

"How came that dog here?" he asked.

"Alone. Three hours ago."

"To-night's paper says that Fagin's took. Is it true, or a lie?"

"True.'

They were silent again.

"Damn you all!" said Sikes, passing his hand across his forehead. "Have you nothing to say to me?"

There was an uneasy movement among them, but nobody spoke.

"You that keep this house," said Sikes, turning his face to Crackit, "do you mean to sell me, or to let me lie here till this hunt is over?"

"You may stop here if you think it safe," returned the person addressed, after some hesitation.

Sikes carried his eye slowly up to the wall behind him; rather trying to turn his head than actually doing it it; and said, "Is—it—the body—is it buried?"

They shook their heads.

"Why isn't it!" he retorted with the same glance behind him. "Wot do they keep such ugly things above the ground for?—Who's that knocking?"

Crackit intimated, by a motion of his hand as he left the room, that there was nothing to fear; and

directly came back with Charley Bates behind him. Sikes sat opposite the door, so that the moment the boy entered the room he encountered his figure.

"Toby," said the boy, falling back, as Sikes turned his eyes toward him, "why didn't you tell me this down stairs?"

There had been something so tremendous in the shrinking off of the three, that the wretched man was willing to propitiate even this lad. Accordingly he nodded, and made as though he would shake hands with him.

'Let me go into some other room," said the boy, retreating still farther.

"Charley!" said Sikes, stepping forward. "Don't you—don't you know me?"

"Don't come nearer me," answered the boy, still retreating, and looking, with horror in his eyes, upon the murderer's face. "You monster!"

The man stopped half-way, and they looked at each other, but Sikes' eyes sunk gradually to the ground.

"Witness you three," cried the boy shaking his clenched fist, and becoming more and more excited as he spoke. "Witness you three—I'm not afraid of him—if they come here after him, I'll give him up; I will. I tell you out at once. He may kill for it if he likes, or if he dares, but if I am here I'll give him up. I'd give him up if he was to be boiled alive.

Murder! Help! If there's the pluck of a man among you three, you'll help me. Murder! Help! Down with him!"

Pouring out these cries, and accompanying them with violent gesticulation, the boy actually threw himself, single-handed, upon the strong man, and in the intensity of his energy and the suddenness of his surprise, brought him heavily to the ground.

The three spectators seemed quite stupefied. They offered no interference, and the boy and man rolled on the ground together; the former, heedless of the blows that showered upon him. wrenching his hands tighter and tighter in the garments about the murderer's breast, and never ceasing to call for help with all his might.

The contest, however, was too unequal to last long. Sikes had him down, and his knee was on his throat, when Crackit pulled him back with a look of alarm, and pointed to the window. There were lights gleaming below, voices in loud and earnest conversation, the tramp of hurried footsteps—endless they seemed in number—crossing the nearest wooden bridge. One man on horseback seemed to be among the crowd; for there was the noise of hoofs rattling on the uneven pavement. The gleam of lights increased; the footsteps came more thickly and noisily on. Then came a loud knocking at the door, and then a hoarse murmur from such a multitude of

angry voices as would have made the boldest quail.

"Help!" shrieked the boy in a voice that rent the air. "He's here! Break down the door!"

"In the King's name," cried the voices without; and the hoarse cry arose again, but louder.

"Break down the door!" screamed the boy. "I tell you they'll never open it. Run straight to the room where the light is. Break down the door!"

Strokes, thick and heavy, rattled upon the door and lower window-shutters as he ceased to speak, and a loud hurrah burst from the crowd; giving the listener, for the first time, some adequate idea of its immense extent.

"Open the door of some place where I can lock this screeching Hell-babe," cried Sikes fiercely; running to and fro, and dragging the boy, now, as easily as if he were an empty sack. "That door. Quick!" He flung him in, bolted it, and turned the key. "Is the down stairs door fast?"

"Double-locked and chained," replied Crackit, who, with the other two men, still remained quite helpless and bewildered.

"The panels--are they strong?"

"Lined with sheet-iron."

"And the windows too?"

"Yes, and the windows."

"Damn you!" cried the desperate ruffian, throw-

ing up the shaft and menacing the crowd. "Do your worst! I'll cheat you yet!"

Of all the terrific yells that ever fell on mortal ears, none could exceed the cry of the infuriated throng. Some shouted to those who were nearest to set the house on fire; others roared to the officers to shoot him dead. Among them all, none showed such fury as the man on horseback, who, throwing himself out of the saddle, and bursting through the crowd as if he were parting water, cried, beneath the window, in a voice that rose above all others, "Twenty guineas to the man who brings a ladder!" The nearest voices took up the cry, and hundreds echoed it. Some called for ladders, some for sledge-hammers; some ran with torches to and fro as if to seek them and still came back and roared again; some spent their breath in impotent curses and execrations; some pressed forward with the ecstacy of madmen, and thus impeded the progress of those below; some among the boldest attempted to climb up by the water-spout and crevices in the wall; and all waved to and fro, in the darkness beneath, like a field of corn moved by an angry wind; and joined from time to time in one loud furious roar.

"The tide," cried the murderer, as he staggered back into the room, and shut the faces out, "the tide was in as I came up. Give me a rope, a long rope. They're all in front. I may drop into the Folly

Ditch, and clear off that way. Give me a rope. or I shall do three more murders and kill myself."

The panic-stricken men pointed to where such articles were kept; the murderer, hastily selecting the longest and strongest cord, hurried up to the house-top.

All the windows in the rear of the house had been long ago bricked up, except one small trap in the room where the boy was locked, and that was too small even for the passage of his body. But, from this aperture he had never ceased to call on those without, to guard the back; and thus, when the murderer emerged at last on the house-top by the door in the roof, a loud shout proclaimed the fact to those in front, who immediately began to pour round, pressing upon each other in an unbroken stream.

He planted a board, which he had carried up with him for the purpose, so firmly against the door that it must be matter of great difficulty to open it from the inside; and creeping over the tiles, looked over the low parapet.

The water was out, and the ditch a bed of mud.

The crowd had been hushed during these few moments, watching his motions and doubtful of his purpose, but the instant they perceived it and knew it was defeated, they raised a cry of triumphant execration to which all their previous shouting had been whispers. Again and again it rose. Those who

were at too great a distance to know its meaning, took up the sound; it seemed as though the whole city had poured its population out to curse him.

On pressed the people from the front—on, on, on, in a strong struggling current of angry faces, with here and there a glaring torch to light them up, and show them out in all their wrath and passion. The houses on the opposite side of the ditch had been entered by the mob; sashes were thrown up, or torn bodily out; there were tiers and tiers of faces in every window; cluster upon cluster of people clinging to every house-top. Each little bridge (and there were three in sight) bent beneath the weight of the crowd upon it. Still the current poured on to find some nook or hole from which to vent their shouts, and only for an instant see the wretch.

"They have him now," cried a man on the nearest bridge. "Hurrah!"

The crowd grew light with uncovered heads; and again the shout uprose.

"I will give fifty pounds," cried an old gentleman from the same quarter, "to the man who takes him alive. I will remain here, till he comes to ask me for it."

There was another roar. At this moment the word was passed among the crowd that the door was forced at last, and that he who had first called for a ladder had mounted into the room. The stream ab-

ruptly turned, as this intelligence ran from mouth to mouth; and the people at the windows, seeing those upon the bridge pouring back, quitted their stations, and running into the street, joined the concourse that now thronged pell-mell to the spot they had left, each man crushing and striving with his neighbor, and all panting with impatience to get near the door and look upon the criminal as the officers brought him out. The cries and shrieks of those who were almost pressed to suffocation, or trampled down and trodden under foot in the confusion, were dreadful; the narrow ways were completely blocked up; and at this time, between the rush of some to regain the space in front of the house, and the unavailing struggles of others to extricate themselves from the mass, the immediate attention was distracted from the murderer, although the universal eagerness for his capture was, if possible, increased.

The man had shrunk down, thoroughly quelled by the ferocity of the crowd, and the impossibility of escape; but seeing the sudden change with no less rapidity than it had occurred, he sprang upon his feet, determined to make one last effort for his life by dropping into the ditch, and at the risk of being stifled, endeavoring to creep away in the darkness and confusion.

Roused into new strength and energy, and stimulated by the noise within the house which announced

that an entrance had really been effected, he set his foot against a stack of chimneys, fastened one end of the rope tightly and firmly around it, and with the other made a strong running noose by the aid of his hands and teeth almost in a second. He could let himself down by the cord to within a less distance of the ground than his own height, and had his knife ready in his hand to cut it then and drop.

At the very instant when he brought the loop over his head previous to slipping it beneath his arm-pits, and when the old gentleman before mentioned (who had clung so tight to the railing of the bridge as to resist the force of the crowd, and retain his position) earnestly warned those about him that the man was about to lower himself down—at that very instant the murderer, looking behind him on the roof, threw his arms above his head, and uttered a yell of terror.

"The eyes again!" he cried in an unearthly screech.

Staggering as if struck by lightning, he lost his balance and tumbled over the parapet. The noose was over his neck. It ran up with its weight, tight as a bow-string, and swift as the arrow it speeds. He fell for five-and-thirty feet. There was a sudden jerk, a terrific convulsion of the limbs; and there he hung, with the open knife clenched in his stiffening hand.

The old chimney quivered with the shock, but

stood it bravely. The murderer swung lifeless against the wall; and the boy, thrusting aside the dangling body which obscured his view, called to the people to come and take him out, for God's sake.

A dog, which had lain concealed till now, ran backward and forward on the parapet with a dismal howl, and collecting himself for a spring, jumped for the dead man's shoulders. Missing his aim, he fell into the ditch, turning completely over as he went; and striking his head against a stone, dashed out his brains.

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.

THE Paper Mill had stopped work for the night, and the paths and roads in its neighborhood were sprinkled with clusters of people going home from their day's labor in it. There were men, women, and children in the groups, and there was no want of lively color to flutter in the gentle evening wind. The mingling of various voices and sound of laughter made a cheerful impression upon the ear, analogous to that of the fluttering colors upon the eye. Into the sheet of water reflecting the flushed sky in the foreground of the living picture, a knot of urchins were casting stones, and watching the expansion of the rippling circles. So, in the rosy evening, one might watch the ever-widening beauty of the landscape—beyond the newly-released workers wending home—beyond the silver river—beyond the deep green fields of corn, so prospering, that the loiterers in their narrow threads of pathway seemed to float immersed breast-high—beyond the hedgerows and the clumps of trees—beyond the windmills on the ridge—away to where the sky appeared to meet the

earth, as if there were no immensity of space between mankind and Heaven.

It was a Saturday evening, and at such a time the village dogs, always much more interested in the doings of humanity than in the affairs of their own species, were particularly active. At the general shop, at the butcher's and at the public-house, they evinced an inquiring spirit never to be satiated. Their especial interest in the public-house would seem to imply some latent rakishness in the canine character; for little was eaten there, and they, having no taste for beer or tobacco (Mrs Hubbard's dog is said to have smoked, but proof is wanting), could only have been attracted by sympathy with loose convivial habits. Moreover, a most wretched fiddle played within; a fiddle so unutterably vile, that one lean long-bodied cur, with a better ear than the rest, found himself under compulsion at intervals to go round the corner and howl. Yet, even he returned to the public-house on each occasion with the tenacity of a confirmed drunkard.

Fearful to relate, there was even a sort of a little Fair in the village. Some despairing gingerbread that had been vainly trying to dispose of itself all over the country, and had cast a quantity of dust upon its head in its mortification, again appealed to the public from an infirm booth. So did a heap of nuts, long, long, exiled from Barcelona, and yet

speaking English so indifferently as to call fourteen of themselves a pint. A Peep-show which had originally started with the Battle of Waterloo, and had since made it every other battle of later date by altering the Duke of Wellington's nose, tempted the student of illustrated history. A Fat Lady, perhaps, in part sustained upon postponed pork, her professional associate being a Learned Pig, displayed her life-size picture in a low dress as she appeared when presented at Court, several yards round. All this was a vicious spectacle, as any poor idea of amusement on the part of the rougher hewers of wood and drawers of water in this land of England ever is and shall be. They *must not* vary the rheumatism with amusement. They may vary it with fever and ague, or with as many rheumatic variations as they have joints; but positively not with entertainment after their own manner.

The various sounds arising from this scene of depravity, and floating away into the still evening air, made the evening, at any point which they just reached fitfully, mellowed by the distance, more still by contrast. Such was the stillness of the evening to Eugene Wrayburn, as he walked by the river with his hands behind him.

He walked slowly, and with the measured step and pre-occupied air of one who was waiting. He walked between the two points, an osier-bed at this

end and some floating lilies at that, and at each point stopped and looked expectantly in one direction.

"It is very quiet," said he.

It was very quiet. Some sheep were grazing on the grass by the riverside, and it seemed to him that he had never before heard the crisp, tearing sound with which they cropped it. He stopped idly and looked at them.

"You are stupid enough, I suppose. But if you are clever enough to get through life tolerably to your satisfaction, you have got the better of me, Man as I am, and Mutton as you are!"

A rustle in a field beyond the hedge attracted his attention. "What's here to do?" he asked himself, leisurely going toward the gate and looking over. "No jealous paper-miller? No pleasures of the chase in this part of the country. Mostly fishing hereabout?"

The field had been newly mown, and there were yet the marks of the scythe on the yellow-green ground, and the track of wheels where the hay had been carried. Following the tracks with his eyes, the view closed with the new hay-rick in the corner.

Now, if he had gone on to the hay-rick, and gone round it? But, say that the event was to be, as the event fell out, and how idle are such suppositions! Besides, if he had gone; what is there of warning in a bargeman lying on his face?

"A bird flying to the hedge," was all he thought about it; and came back, and resumed his walk.

"If I had not a reliance on her being truthful," said Eugene, after taking some half-dozen turns, "I should begin to think she had given me the slip for the second time. But she promised, and she is a girl of her word."

Turning again at the water-lilies, he saw her coming, and advanced to meet her.

"I was saying to myself, Lizzie, that you were sure to come, though you were late."

"I had to linger through the village as if I had no object before me, and I had to speak to several people in passing along, Mr. Wrayburn."

"Are the lads of the village—and the ladies—such scandal-mongers?" he asked, as he took her hand and drew it through his arm.

She submitted to walk slowly on with downcast eyes. He put her hand to his lips, and she quietly drew it away.

"Will you walk beside me, Mr. Wrayburn, and not touch me?" For, his arm was already stealing around her waist.

She stopped again, and gave him an earnest supplicating look. "Well, Lizzie, well!" said he, in an easy way, though ill at ease with himself, "don't be unhappy, don't be reproachful."

"I cannot help being unhappy, but I do not mean to

be reproachful. Mr. Wrayburn, I implore you to go away from this neighborhood to-morrow morning.'

"Lizzie, Lizzie, Lizzie!" he remonstrated. "As well be reproachful as wholly unreasonable. I can't go away."

"Why not?"

"Faith!" said Eugene in his airily candid manner. "Because you won't let me. Mind! I don't mean to be reproachful either. I don't complain that you design to keep me here. But you do it, you do it."

"Will you walk beside me, and not touch me," for his arm was coming about her again; "while I speak to you very seriously, Mr. Wrayburn?"

"I will do anything within the limits of possibility, for you, Lizzie," he answered with pleasant gayety as he folded his arms. "See here! Napoleon Bonaparte at St. Helena."

"When you spoke to me as I came from the Mill the night before last," fixing her eyes upon him with a look of supplication which troubled his better nature, "you told me that you were much surprised to see me, and that you were on a solitary fishing excursion. Was it true?"

"It was not," replied Eugene composedly, "in the least true. I came here because I had information that I could find you here."

"Can you magine why I left London, Mr. Wrayburn?"

"I am afraid, Lizzie," he openly answered, "that you left London to get rid of me. It is not flattering to my self-love, but I am afraid you did."

"I did."

"How could you be so cruel?"

"Oh, Mr. Wrayburn," she answered, suddenly breaking into tears, "is the cruelty on my side? Oh, Mr. Wrayburn, is there no cruelty in your being here to-night?"

"In the name of all that's good—and that is not conjuring you in my own name—for Heaven knows I am not good"—said Eugene, "don't be distressed!"

"What else can I be, when I know the distance and the difference between us? What else can I be, when to tell me why you came here, is to put me to shame!" said Lizzie, covering her face.

He looked at her with a real sentiment of a remorseful tenderness and pity. It was not strong enough to impel him to sacrifice himself and spare her, but it was a strong emotion.

"Lizzie! I never thought before, that there was a woman in the world who could affect me so much by saying so little. But don't be hard in your construction of me. You don't know what my state of mind toward you is. You don't know how you haunt and bewilder me. You don't know how the crushed carelessness that is over-officious in helping me at every other turning of my life, won't help me here.

You have struck it dead, I think, and I sometimes almost wish you had struck me dead along with it."

She had not been prepared for such passionate expressions, and they awakened some natural sparks of feminine pride and joy in her breast. To consider, wrong as he was, that he could care so much for her, and that she had the power to move him so!

"It grieves you to see me distressed, Mr. Wrayburn; it grieves me to see you distressed. I don't reproach you. Indeed, I don't reproach you. You have not felt this as I feel it, being so different from me, and beginning from another point of view. You have not thought. But I entreat you to think now!"

"What am I to think of?" asked Eugene bitterly.

"Think of me."

"Tell me how *not* to think of you, Lizzie, and you'll change me altogether."

"I don't mean in that way. Think of me, as belonging to another station, and quite cut off from you in honor. Remember that I have no protector near me, unless I have one in your noble heart. Respect my good name. If you feel toward me, in one particular, as you might if I was a lady, give me the full claims of a lady upon your generous behavior. I am removed from you and your family by being a working girl. How true a gentleman to be as considerate of me as if I was removed by being a Queen!"

He would have been base indeed to have stood

untouched by her appeal. His face expressed contrition and indecision as he asked:

"Have I injured you so much, Lizzie?"

"No, no. You may set me quite right. I don't speak of the past, Mr. Wrayburn, but of the present and the future. Are we not here now, because through two days you have followed me so closely where there are so many eyes to see you, that I consented to this appointment as an escape?"

"Again, not very flattering to my self-love," said Eugene moodily; "but yes. Yes. Yes."

"Then I beseech you, Mr. Wrayburn, I beg and pray, you leave this neighborhood. If you do not, consider to what you will drive me."

He did consider within himself for a moment or two, and then retorted, "Drive you? To what shall I drive you, Lizzie?"

"You will drive me away. I live here peacefully and respected, and I am well employed here. You will force me to quit this place as I quitted London, and,—by following me again—will force me to quit the next place in which I may find refuge, as I quitted this."

"Are you so determined, Lizzie—forgive the word I am going to use, for it is literal truth—to fly from a lover?"

"I am so determined," she answered resolutely, though trembling, "to fly from such a lover. There was a poor woman died here but a little while ago,

scores of years older than I am, whom I found by chance, lying on the wet earth. You may have heard some account of her?"

"I think I have," he answered, "if her name was Higden?"

"Her name was Higden. Though she was so weak and old, she kept true to one purpose to the very last. Even at the very last, she made me promise that her purpose should be kept to, after she was dead, so settled was her determination. What she did, I can do. Mr. Wrayburn, if I believed—but I do not believe—that you could be so cruel to me as to drive me from place to place to wear me out, you should drive me to death and not do it."

He looked full at her handsome face, and in his own handsome face there was a light of blended admiration, anger and reproach, which she—who loved him so in secret—whose heart had long been so full, and he the cause of its overflowing—drooped before. She tried hard to retain her firmness, but he saw it melting away under his eyes. In the moment of its dissolution, and of his first full knowledge of his influence upon her, she drooped, and he caught her on his arm.

"Lizzie! Rest so a moment. Answer what I ask you. If I had not been what you call removed from you and cut off from you, would you have made this appeal to me to leave you?"

"I don't know, I don't know. Don't ask me, Mr. Wrayburn. Let me go back."

"I swear to you, Lizzie, you shall go directly. I swear to you, you shall go alone. I'll not accompany you, I'll not follow you, if you will reply."

"How can I, Mr. Wrayburn? How can I tell you what I should have done, if you had not been what you are?"

"If I had not been what you make me out to be," he struck in, skillfully changing the form of words, "would you still have hated me?"

"O Mr. Wrayburn," she replied appealing, and weeping, "you know me better than to think I do!"

"If I had not been what you make me out to be, Lizzie, would you still have been indifferent to me?"

"O Mr. Wrayburn," she answered as before, "you know me better than that too!"

There was something in the attitude of her whole figure as he supported it, and she hung her head, which besought him to be merciful and not force her to disclose her heart. He was not merciful with her, and he made her do it.

"If I know you better than quite to believe (unfortunate dog though I am!) that you hate me, or even that you are wholly Indifferent to me Lizzie, let me know so much more from yourself before we separate. Let me know how you would have dealt with me if

you had regarded me as being what you would have considered on equal terms with you."

"It is impossible Mr. Wrayburn. How can I think of you as being on equal terms with me? If my mind could put you on equal terms with me, you could not be yourself. How could I remember, then, the night when I first saw you, and when I went out of the room because you looked at me so attentively? Or, the night that passed into the morning when you broke to me that my father was dead? Or, the nights when you used to come to see me at my next home? Or, your having known how uninstructed I was and having caused me to be taught better? Or, my having so looked up to you and wondered at you, and at first thought you so good to be at all mindful of me?"

"Only 'at first' thought me so good, Lizzie? What did you think me after 'at first?' So bad?"

"I don't say that. I don't mean that. But after the first wonder and pleasure of being noticed by one so different from any one who had ever spoken to me, I began to feel that it might have been better if I had never seen you."

"Why?"

"Because you *were* so different," she answered in a lower voice. "Because it was so endless, so hopeless. Spare me."

"Did you think for me at all, Lizzie?" he asked, as if he were a little stung.

"Not much, Mr. Wrayburn. Not much until to-night."

"Will you tell me why?"

"I never supposed until to night that you needed to be thought for. But if you need to be; if you do truly feel at heart that you have indeed been towards me what you have called yourself to-night, and that there is nothing for us in this life but separation; then Heaven help you, and Heaven bless you!"

The purity with which in these words she expressed something of her own love and her own suffering, made a deep impression on him for the passing time. He held her, almost as if she were sanctified to him by death, and kissed her, once, almost as he might have kissed the dead.

"I promised that I would not accompany you, nor follow you. Shall I keep you in view? You have been agitated, and it's growing dark."

"I am used to be out alone at this hour, and I entreat you not to do so."

"I promise. I can bring myself to promise nothing more to-night, Lizzie, except that I will try what I can do."

"There is but one means, Mr. Wrayburn, of sparing yourself and of sparing me, every way. Leave this neighborhood to-morrow morning."

"I will try."

As he spoke the words in a grave voice, she put

her hand in his, removed it, and went away by the riverside.

"Now, could Mortimer believe this?" murmured Eugene, still remaining, after a while, where she had left him. "Can I even believe it myself?"

He referred to the circumstance that there were tears upon his hand, as he stood covering his eyes. "A most ridiculous position this, to be found out in!" was his next thought. And his next struck its root in a little rising resentment against the cause of the tears.

"Yet I have gained a wonderful power over her, too, let her be as much in earnest as she will!"

The reflection brought back the yielding of her face and form as she had drooped under his gaze. Contemplating the reproduction, he seemed to see, for the second time, in the appeal and in the confession of weakness, a little fear.

"And she loves me. And so earnest a character must be very earnest in that passion. She cannot choose for herself to be strong in this fancy, wavering in that, and weak in the other. She must go through with her nature, as I must go through with mine. If mine exacts its pains and penalties all round, so must hers, I suppose."

Pursuing the inquiry into his own nature, he thought, "Now, if I married her. If, outfacing the absurdity of the situation in correspondence with M.

R. F., I astonished M. R. F. to the utmost extent of his respected powers, by informing him that I had married her, how would M. R. F. reason with the legal mind? 'You wouldn't marry for some money and some station, because you were frightfully likely to become bored. Are you less frightfully likely to be come bored, marrying for no money and no station? Are you sure of yourself?' Legal mind, in spite of forensic protestations, must secretly admit, 'Good reasoning on the part of M. R. F. *Not* sure of myself.'"

In the very act of calling this tone of levity to his aid, he felt it to be profligate and worthless, and asserted her against it.

"And yet," said Eugene, "I should like to see the fellow (Mortimer excepted) who would undertake to tell me that this was not a real sentiment on my part, won out of me by her beauty and her worth, in spite of myself, and that I would not be true to her. I should particularly like to see the fellow to-night who would tell me so, or would tell me anything that could be construed to her disadvantage; for I am wearily out of sorts with one Wrayburn who cuts a sorry figure, and I would rather be out of sorts with somebody else. 'Eugene, Eugene, Eugene, this is a bad business.' Ah! so go the Mortimer Lightwood bells, and they sound melancholy to-night."

Strolling on, he thought of something else to take himself to task for. "Where is the analogy, Brute

Beast," he said impatiently, between a woman whom your father coolly finds out for you and a woman whom you have found, Eugene, out for yourself, and have ever drifted after with more and more of constancy since you first set eyes upon her? Ass! Canst thou reason no better than that?

But, again he subsided into a reminiscence of his first full knowledge of his power just now, and of her disclosure of her heart. To try no more to go away, and to try her again, was the reckless conclusion it turned uppermost. And yet again, Eugene, Eugene, this is a bad business!" And, "I wish I could stop the Lightwood peal, for it sounds like a knell."

Looking above, he found that the young moon was up, and that the stars were beginning to shine in the sky from which the tones of red and yellow were flickering out, in favor of the calm blue of a summer night. He was still by the riverside. Turning suddenly, he met a man, so close upon him that Eugene, surprised, stepped back, to avoid a collision. The man carried something over his shoulder which might have been a broken oar, or spar, or bar, and took no notice of him, but passed on.

"Hallo, friend!" said Eugene, calling after him, "are you blind?"

The man made no reply, but went his way.

Eugene Wrayburn went the opposite way, with his hands behind him and his purpose in his thoughts.

He passed the sheep, and passed the gate, and came within hearing of the village sounds, and came to the bridge. The inn where he stayed, like the village and the mill, was not across the river, but on that side of the stream on which he walked. However, knowing the rushy bank and back-water on the other side to be a retired place, and feeling out of humor for noises or company, he crossed the bridge, and sauntered on: looking up at the stars as they seemed one by one to be kindled in the sky, and looking down at the river as the same stars seemed to be kindled deep in the water. A landing-place overshadowed by a willow, and a pleasure-boat lying moored there among some stakes, caught his eye as he passed along. The spot was in such dark shadow, that he paused to make out what was there, and then passed on again.

The rippling of the river seemed to cause a correspondent stir in his uneasy reflections. He would have laid them asleep if he could, but they were in movement, like the stream, and all tending one way with a strong current. As the ripple under the moon broke unexpectedly now and then, and plainly flashed in a new shape and with a new sound, so parts of his thoughts started, unbidden, from the rest, and revealed their wickedness. "Out of the question to marry her," said Eugeue, "and out of the quesiton to leave her. The crisis!"

He had sauntered far enough. Before turning to retrace his steps, he stopped upon the margin, to look down at the reflected night. In an instant, with a dreadful crash, the reflected night turned crooked, flames shot jaggedly across the air, and the moon and stars came bursting from the sky.

Was he struck by lightning? With some incoherent half-formed thought to that effect, he turned under the blows that were blinding him and mashing his life, and closed with a murderer, whom he caught by a red neckerchief—unless the raining down of his own blood gave it that hue.

Eugene was light, active, and expert; but his arms were broken, or he was paralyzed, and could do no more than hang on to the man, with his head swung back, so that he could see nothing but the heaving sky. After dragging at the assailant, he fell on the bank with him, and then there was another great crash, and then a splash, and all was done.

Lizzie Hexam, too, had avoided the noise, and the Saturday movement of people in the struggling street, and chose to walk alone by the water until her tears should be dry, and she could so compose herself as to escape remark upon her looking ill or unhappy on going home. The peaceful serenity of the hour and place, having no reproaches or evil intentions within her breast to contend against, sank healingly

into its depths. She had meditated and taken comfort. She, too, was turning homeward, when she heard a strange sound.

It startled her, for it was like a sound of blows. She stood still and listened. It sickened her, for blows fell heavily and cruelly on the quiet of the night. As she listened, undecided, all was silent. As she listened, she heard a faint groan, and a fall into the river.

Her old bold life and habit instantly inspired her. Without vain waste of breath in crying for help where there none to hear, she ran toward the spot from which the sounds had come. It lay between her and the bridge, but it was more removed from her than she had thought: the night being so very quiet, and sound traveling far with the help of water.

At length, she reached a part of the green bank, much and newly trodden, where there lay some broken splintered pieces of wood and some torn fragments of clothes. Stooping, she saw that the grass was bloody. Following the drops and smears, she saw that the watery margin of the bank was bloody. Following the current with her eyes, she saw a bloody face turned up toward the moon, and drifting away.

Now, merciful Heaven be thanked for that old time, and grant, O Blessed Lord, that through thy wonderful workings it may turn to good at last! To

whomsoever the drifting face belongs, be it man's or woman's, help my humble hands, Lord God, to raise it from death and restore it to some one to whom it must be dear!

It was thought, fervently thought, but not for a moment did the prayer check her. She was away before it welled up in her mind, away, swift and true, yet steady above all—for without steadiness it could never be done—to the landing-place under the willow tree, where she also had seen the boat lying moored among the stakes.

A sure touch of her old practised hand, a sure step of her old practised foot, a sure light balance of her body, and she was in the boat. A quick glance of her practised eye showed her, even through the deep dark shadow, the sculls in a rack against the red-brick garden-wall. Another moment, and she cast off (taking the line with her), and the boat had shot out into the moonlight, and she was rowing down the stream as never other woman rowed on English water.

Intently over her shoulder, with slackening speed, she looked ahead for the driving face. She passed the scene of the struggle—yonder it was, on her left, well over the boat's stern—she passed on her right, the end of the village street, a hilly street that almost dipped into the river; its sounds were growing faint again, and she slackened; looking as the boat drove everywhere, everywhere, for the floating face.

She merely kept the boat before the stream now, and rested on her oars, knowing well that if the face were not soon visible, it had gone down, and she would over-shoot it. An untrained sight would never have seen by the moonlight what she saw at the length of a few strokes astern. She saw the drowning figure rise to the surface, slightly struggle, and as if by instinct turn over on its back to float. Just so had she firmly seen the face which she now dimly saw again.

Firm of look and firm of purpose, she intently watched its coming on, until it was very near; then, with a touch unshipped her sculls, and crept aft in the boat, between kneeling and crouching. Once, she let the body evade her, not being sure of her grasp. Twice, and she had seized it by its bloody hair.

It was insensible, if not virtually dead; it was mutilated, and streaked the water all about it with dark red streaks. As it could not help itself, it was impossible for her to get it on board. She bent over the stern to secure it with the line, and then the river and its shores rang to the terrible cry she uttered.

But, as if possessed by supernatural spirit and strength, she lashed it safe, resumed her seat, and rowed in, desperately, for the nearest shallow water where she might run the boat aground. Desperately but not wildly, for she knew that if she lost distinctness of intention, all was lost and gone.

She ran the boat ashore, went into the water, released him from the line, and by main strength lifted him in her arms and laid him in the bottom of the boat. He had fearful wounds upon him, and she bound them up with her dress torn into strips. Else, supposing him to be still alive, she foresaw that he must bleed to death before he could be landed at his inn, which was the nearest place for succor. This done very rapidly, she kissed his disfigured forehead, looked up in anguish to the stars, and blessed him and forgave him, "if she had anything to forgive." It was only in that instant that she thought of herself, and then she thought of herself only for him.

Now, merciful Heaven be thanked for that old time, enabling me without a wasted moment, to have got the boat afloat again, and to row back against the stream! And grant, O Blessed Lord God, that through poor me he may be raised from death, and preserved to some one else to whom he may be dear one day, though never dearer than to me!

She rowed hard—rowed desperately, but never wildly—and seldom removed her eyes from him in the bottom of the boat. She had so laid him there, as that she might see his disfigured face; it was so much disfigured that his mother might have covered it, but it was above and beyond disfigurement in her eyes.

The boat touched the edge of the patch of inn

lawn, sloping gently to the water. There were lights in the windows, but there chanced to be no one out of doors. She made the boat fast, and again by main strength took him up, and never laid him down until she laid him down in the house.

Surgeons were sent for, and she sat supporting his head. She had oftentimes heard in days that were gone, how doctors would lift the hand of an insensible wounded person, and would drop it if the person were dead. She waited for the awful moment when the doctors might lift this hand, all broken and bruised, and let it fall.

The first of the surgeons came, and asked, before proceeding to his examination, "Who brought him in?"

"I brought him in, sir!" answered Lizzie, at whom all present looked.

"You, my dear? You could not lift, far less carry this weight."

"I think I could not, at another time, sir; but I am sure I did."

The surgeon looked at her with great attention, and with some compassion. Having with a grave face touched the wounds upon the head, and the broken arms, he took the hand.

Oh! would he let it drop.

He appeared irresolute. He did not retain it, but laid it gently down, took a candle, looked more

closely at the injuries on the head, and at the pupils of the eyes. That done, he replaced the candle and took the hand again. Another surgeon then coming in, the two exchanged a whisper, and the second took the hand. Neither did he let it fall at once, but kept it for a while and laid it gently down.

"Attend to the poor girl," said the first surgeon then. "She is quite unconscious. She sees nothing and hears nothing. All the better for her! Don't rouse her, if you can help it; only move her. Poor girl, poor girl! She must be amazingly strong of heart, but it is much to be feared that she has set her heart upon the dead. Be gentle with her."

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A DARKENED and hushed room; the river outside the windows flowing on to the vast ocean; a figure on the bed, swathed and bandaged and bound, lying helpless on its back, with its two useless arms in splints at its sides. Only two days of usage so familiarized the little dressmaker with this scene, that it held the place occupied two days ago by the recollections of years.

He had scarcely moved since her arrival. Sometimes his eyes were open, sometimes closed. When they were open, there was no meaning in their unwinking stare at one spot straight before them, unless for a minute the brow knitted into a faint expres-

sion of anger, or surprise. Then, Mortimer Lightwood would speak to him, and on occasions he would be so far roused as to make an attempt to pronounce his friend's name. But, in an instant consciousness was gone again, and no spirit of Eugene was in Eugene's crushed outer form.

They provided Jenny with materials for plying her work, and she had a little table placed at the foot of his bed. Sitting there, with her rich shower of hair falling over the chair-back, they hoped she might attract his notice. With the same object, she would sing, just above her breath, when he opened his eyes, or she saw his brow knit into that faint expression, so evanescent that it was like a shape made in water. But as yet he had not heeded. The "they" here mentioned were the medical attendant; Lizzie, who was there in all her intervals of rest; and Lightwood, who never left him.

The two days became three, and the three days became four. At length, quite unexpectedly, he said something in a whisper.

"What was it, my dear Eugene?"

"Will you, Mortimer——"

"Will I——?"

"Send for her?"

"My dear fellow, she is here."

The little dressmaker stood up at the foot of the bed, humming her song, and nodded to him brightly,

"I can't shake hands, Jenny," said Eugene, with something of his old look; "but I am very glad to see you."

Mortimer repeated this to her, for it could only be made out by bending over him and closely watching his attempts to say it. . . .

"Stay and help to nurse me," said Eugene, quietly.

She touched his lips with her hand, and shaded her eyes with the same hand as she went back to her work and her little song. He heard the song with evident pleasure, until she allowed it gradually to sink away into silence.

"Mortimer."

"My dear Eugene."

"If you can give me anything to keep me here for only a few minutes ——"

"To keep you here, Eugene?"

"To prevent my wandering away I don't know where—for I begin to be sensible that I have just come back, and that I shall lose myself again—do so, dear boy!"

Mortimer gave him such stimulants as could be given him with safety (they were always at hand, ready), and bending over him once more, was about to caution him, when he said:

"Don't tell me not to speak, for I must speak. If you knew the harassing anxiety that gnaws and wears me when I am wandering in those places—where are

those endless places, Mortimer? They must be at an immense distance!"

He saw in his friend's face that he was losing himself; for he added after a moment: "Don't be afraid —I am not gone yet. What was it?"

"You wanted to tell me something, Eugene. My poor dear fellow, you wanted to say something to your old friend—to the friend who has always loved you, admired you, imitated you, founded himself upon you, been nothing without you, and who, God knows, would be here in your place if he could."

"Tut, tut!" said Eugene with a tender glance as the other put his hand before his face. "I am not worth it. I acknowledge that I like it, dear boy, but I am not worth it. This attack, my dear Mortimer; this murder——"

His friend leaned over him with renewed attention, saying: "You and I suspect some one."

"More than suspect. But, Mortimer, while I lie here, and when I lie here no longer, I trust to you that the perpetrator is never brought to justice."

"Eugene?"

"Her innocent reputation would be ruined, my friend. She would be punished, not he. I have wronged her enough in fact; I have wronged her still more in intention. You recollect what pavement is said to be made of good intentions. It is made of

bad intentions too. Mortimer, I am lying on it, and I know!"

"Be comforted, my dear Eugene."

"I will, when you have promised me. Dear Mortimer, the man must never be pursued. If he should be accused, you must keep him silent and save him. Don't think of avenging me; think only of hushing the story and protecting her. You can confuse the case, and turn aside the circumstances. Listen to what I say to you. It was not the schoolmaster, Bradley Headstone. Do you hear me? Twice; it was not the schoolmaster, Bradley Headstone. Do you hear me? Three times; it was not the schoolmaster, Bradley Headstone."

He stopped, exhausted. His speech had been whispered, broken, and indistinct; but by a great effort he had made it plain enough to be unmistakable.

"Dear fellow, I am wandering away. Stay me for another moment, if you can."

Lightwood lifted his head at the neck, and put a wine glass to his lips. He rallied.

"I don't know how long ago it was done, whether weeks, days or hours. No matter. There is inquiry on foot, and pursuit. Say! Is there not?"

"Yes."

"Check it; divert it! Don't let her be brought in question. Shield her. The guilty man, brought to

justice, would poison her name. Let the guilty man go unpunished. Lizzie and my reparation before all! Promise me!"

"Eugene, I do. I promise you."

In the act of turning his eyes gratefully toward his friend, he wandered away. His eyes stood still, and settled into that former intent unmeaning stare.

Hours and hours, days and nights, he remained in this same condition. There were times when he would calmly speak to his friend after a long period of unconsciousness, and would says he was better, and would ask for something. Before it could be given him, he would be gone again.

The dolls' dressmaker, all softened compassion now, watched him with an earnestness that never relaxed. She would regularly change the ice, or the cooling spirit, on his head, and would keep her ear at the pillow between-whiles, listening for any faint words that fell from him in his wanderings. It was amazing through how many hours at a time she would remain beside him, in a crouching attitude, attentive to his slightest moan. As he could not move a hand, he could make no sign of distress; but, through this close watching (if through no secret sympathy or power) the little creature attained an understanding of him that Lightwood did not possess. Mortimer would often turn to her, as if she were an interpreter between this sentient world and the in

sensible man; and she would change the dressing of a wound, or ease a ligature, or turn his face, or alter the pressure of the bed-clothes on him, with an absolute certainty of doing right. The natural lightness and delicacy of touch which had become very refined by practice in her miniature work, no doubt was involved in this; but her perception was at least as fine.

The one word, Lizzie, he muttered millions of times. In a certain phase of his distressful state, which was the worst to those who tended him, he would roll his head upon the pillow, incessantly repeating the name in a hurried and impatient manner, with the misery of a disturbed mind, and the monotony of a machine. Equally, when he lay still and staring, he would repeat it for hours without cessation, but then always in a tone of subdued warning and horror. Her presence and her touch upon his breast or face would often stop this, and then they learned to expect that he would for some time remain still, with his eyes closed, and that he would be conscious on opening them. But, the heavy disappointment of their hope—revived by the welcome silence of the room—was, that his spirit would glide away again and be lost, in the moment of their joy that it was there.

This frequent rising of a drowning man from the deep, to sink again, was dreadful to the beholders.

But gradually the change stole upon him that it became dreadful to himself.

His desire to impart something that was on his mind, his unspeakable yearning to have speech with his friend and make a communication to him, so troubled him when he recovered consciousness, that its term was thereby shortened. As the man rising from the deep would disappear the sooner for fighting with the water, so he in his desperate struggle went down again.

One afternoon when he had been lying still, and Lizzie unrecognized, had just stolen out of the room to pursue her occupation, he uttered Lightwood's name.

"My dear Eugene, I am here."

"How long is this to last, Mortimer?"

Lightwood shook his head. "Still, Eugene, you are no worse than you were."

"But I know there's no hope. Yet I pray it may last long enough for you to do me one last service, and for me to do one last action. Keep me here a few moments, Mortimer. Try, try!"

His friend gave him what aid he could, and encouraged him to believe that he was more composed, though even then his eyes were losing the expression they so rarely recovered.

"Hold me here, dear fellow, if you can. Stop my wandering away. I am going!"

"Not yet, not yet. Tell me, dear Eugene, what is it I shall do?"

"Keep me here for only a single minute. I am going away again. Don't let me go. Hear me speak first. Stop me—stop me!"

"My poor Eugene, try to be calm."

"I do try. I try so hard, If you only knew how hard! Don't let me wander till I have spoken. Give me a little more wine."

Lightwood complied. Eugene, with a most pathetic struggle against the unconsciousness that was coming over him, and with a look of appeal that affected his friend profoundly, said:

"You can leave me with Jenny, while you speak to her and tell her what I beseech of her. You can leave me with Jenny, while you are gone. There's not much for you to do. You won't be long away."

"No, no, no. But tell me what it is that I shall do, Eugene!"

"I am going! You can't hold me."

"Tell me in a word, Eugene!"

His eyes were fixed again, and the only word that came from his lips was the word millions of times repeated. Lizzie, Lizzie, Lizzie.

But the watchful little dressmaker had been vigilant as ever in her watch, and she now came up and touched Lightwood's arm as he looked down at his friend, despairingly.

"Hush!" she said, with her finger on her lips. "His eyes are closing. He'll be conscious when he next opens them. Shall I give you a leading word to say to him?"

"Oh, Jenny, if you could only give me the right word!"

"I can. Stoop down,"

He stooped, and she whispered in his ear. She whispered in his ear one short word of a single syllable. Lightwood started, and looked at her.

"Try it," said the little creature, with an excited and exultant face. She then bent over the unconscious man, and, for the first time, kissed him on the cheek, and kissed the poor maimed hand that was nearest her. Then she withdrew to the foot of the bed.

Some two hours afterward, Mortimer Lightwood saw his friend's consciousness come back, and instantly, but very tranquilly, bent over him.

"Don't speak, Eugene. Do no more than look at me, and listen to me. You follow what I say?"

He moved his head in assent.

"I am going on from the point where we broke off. Is the word we should have come to—is it—Wife?"

"Oh, God bless you, Mortimer!"

"Hush! don't be agitated. Don't speak. Hear me, dear Eugene. Your mind will be more at peace,

lying here, if you make Lizzie your wife. You wish me to speak to her, and tell her so, and entreat her to be your wife. You ask her to kneel at this bedside and be married to you, that your reparation may be complete. Is that so?"

"Yes. God bless you! Yes."

"It shall be done, Eugene. Trust it to me. I shall have to go away for some few hours, to give effect to your wishes. You see this is unavoidable?"

"Dear friend, I said so."

"True. But I had not the clue then. How do you think I got it?"

Glancing wistfully around, Eugene saw Miss Jenny at the foot of the bed, looking at him with her elbows on the bed, and her head upon her hands. There was a trace of his whimsical air upon him, as he tried to smile at her.

"Yes, indeed," said Lightwood, "the discovery was hers. Observe, my dear Eugene; while I am away you will know that I have discharged my trust with Lizzie, by finding her here, in my present place at your bedside, to leave you no more. A final word before I go. This is the right course of a true man, Eugene. And I solemnly believe, with all my soul, that if Providence should mercifully restore you to us, you will be blessed with a noble wife in the preserver of your life, whom you will dearly love."

"Amen. I am sure of that. But I shall not come through it, Mortimer."

"You will not be the less hopeful or less strong for this, Eugene."

"No. Touch my face with yours, in case I should not hold out till you come back. I love you Mortimer. Don't be uneasy for me while you are gone. If my dear brave girl will take me, I feel persuaded that I shall live long enough to be married, dear fellow."

Miss Jenny gave up altogether on this parting taking place between the friends, and sitting with her back toward the bed in the bower made by her bright hair, wept heartily, though noiselessly. Mortimer Lightwood was soon gone. As the evening light lengthened the heavy reflections of the trees in the river, another figure came with a soft step into the sick room.

"Is he conscious?" asked the little dressmaker, as the figure took its station by the pillow. For Jenny had given place to it immediately, and could not see the sufferer's face, in the dark room, from her new and removed position.

"He is conscious, Jenny," murmured Eugene for himself. "He knows his wife."

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Far on in the night, Eugene opened his eyes. He

was sensible, and said at once: "How does the time go? Has our Mortimer come back?"

Lightwood was there immediately, to answer for himself. "Yes, Eugene, and all is ready."

"Dear boy!" returned Eugene, with a smile, "we both thank you heartily. Lizzie, tell them how welcome they are, and that I would be eloquent if I could."

"There is no need," said Mr. Milvey. "We know it. Are you better, Mr. Wrayburn?"

"I am much happier," said Eugene.

"Much better too, I hope?"

Eugene turned his eyes toward Lizzie, as if to spare her, and answered nothing.

Then they all stood around the bed, and Mr. Milvey, opening his book, began the service; so rarely associated with the shadow of death; so inseparable in the mind from a flush of life and gayety and hope and health and joy. Mrs. Milvey overflowed with pity, and wept. The doll's dressmaker, with her hands before her face, wept in her golden bower. Reading in a low clear voice, and bending over Eugene, who kept his eyes upon him, Mr. Milvey did his office with suitable simplicity. As the bridegroom could not move his hand, they touched his fingers with the ring, and so put it on the bride. When the two plighted their troth, she laid her hand on his and kept it there. When the ceremony was done,

and all the rest departed from the room, she drew her arm under his head, and laid her own head down upon the pillow by his side.

"Undraw the curtains, my dear girl," said Eugene, after a while, "and let us see our wedding-day."

The sun was rising, and his first rays struck into the room as she came back and put her lips to his. "I bless the day!" said Eugene. "I bless the day!" said Lizzie.

"You have made a poor marriage of it, my sweet wife," said Eugene. "A shattered graceless fellow, stretched at his length here, and next to nothing for you when you are a young widow."

"I have made the marriage that I would have given all the world to dare to hope for," she replied.

"You have thrown yourself away," said Eugene, shaking his head. "But you have followed the treasure of your heart. My justification is, that you have thrown that away first, dear girl!"

"No. I had given it to you."

"The same thing, my poor Lizzie!"

"Hush, hush! A very different thing."

There were tears in his eyes, and she besought him to close them. "No," said Eugene, shaking his head; "Let me look at you, Lizzie, while I can You brave devoted girl! You heroine!"

Her own eyes filled under his praises. And when

he mustered strength to move his wounded head a very little way, and lay it on her bosom, the tears of both fell.

"Lizzie," said Eugene, after a silence: "when you see me wandering away from this refuge that I have so ill deserved, speak to me by my name, and I think I shall come back."

"Yes, dear Eugene."

"There!" he exclaimed, smiling. "I should have gone then but for that!"

A little while afterward, when he appeared to be sinking into insensibility, she said, in a calm loving voice: "Eugene, my dear husband!" He immediately answered: "There again! You see how you can recall me!" and afterward, when he could not speak, he still answered by a slight movement of his head upon her bosom.

The sun was high in the sky when she gently disengaged herself to give him the stimulants and nourishment he required. The utter helplessness of the wreck of him that lay cast ashore there now alarmed her, but he himself appeared a little more hopeful.

"Ah, my beloved Lizzie!" he said, faintly. "How shall I ever pay all I owe you, if I recover!"

"Don't be ashamed of me," she replied, "and you will have more than paid all."

"It would require a life, Lizzie, to pay all; more than a life."

"Live for that, then; live for me, Eugene; live to see how hard I will try to improve myself, and never to discredit you."

"My darling girl," he replied, rallying more of his old manner than he had ever yet got together. "On the contrary, I have been thinking whether it is not the best thing I can do, to die."

"The best thing you can do, to leave me with a broken heart?"

"I don't mean that, my dear girl. I was not thinking of that. What I was thinking of was this. Out of your compassion for me, in this maimed and broken state, you make so much of me—you think so well of me—you love so dearly!"

"Heaven knows I love you dearly!"

"And Heaven knows I prize it! Well. If I live, you'll find me out."

"I shall find out that my husband has a mine of purpose and energy, and will turn it to the best account?"

"I hope so, dearest Lizzie," said Eugene, wistfully, and yet somewhat whimsically. "I hope so. But I can't summon the vanity to think so. How can I think so, looking back on such a trifling, wasted youth as mine! I humbly hope it; but I daren't believe it. There is a sharp misgiving in my conscience that if I were to live, I should disappoint your good opinion and my own—and that I ought to die, my dear!"

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But, the greatest event of all, in the new life of Mr. and Mrs. John Harmon, was a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Wrayburn. Sadly wan and worn was the once gallant Eugene, and walked resting on his wife's arm, and leaning heavily upon a stick. But, he was daily growing stronger and better, and it was declared by the medical attendants that he might not be much disfigured by and by.

To Mr. Eugene Wrayburn, in confidence, did Mrs. John Harmon impart what she had known of the state of his wife's affections, in his reckless time. And to Mrs. John Harmon, in confidence, did Mr. Eugene Wrayburn impart that, please God, she should see how his wife had changed him.

"I make no protestations," said Eugene; "—who does, who means them!—I have made a resolution."

"But would you believe, Bella," interposed his wife, coming to resume her nurse's place at his side, for he never got on well without her: "that on our wedding day he told me he almost thought the best thing he could do, was to die?"

"As I didn't do it, Lizzie," said Eugene, "I'll do that better thing you suggested—for your sake."

THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

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"NOW," said Wardle, after a substantial lunch, with the agreeable items of strong-beer and cherry-brandy, had been done ample justice to; "what say you to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time."

"Capital!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Prime!" ejaculated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"You skate, of course, Winkle?" said Wardle.

"Ye-yes; oh, yes," replied Mr. Winkle. "I—I—am *rather* out of practice."

"Oh, *do* skate, Mr. Winkle," said Arabella. "I like to see it so much."

"Oh, it is *so* graceful," said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swan-like."

"I should be very happy, I'm sure," said Mr. Winkle, reddening; "but I have no skates."

This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had a couple of pair, and the fat boy announced that there were half-a-dozen more down stairs; whereat

Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and the fat boy and Mr. Weller, having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr. Bob Sawyer adjusted his skates with a dexterity which to Mr. Winkle was perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight, and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, to the excessive satisfaction of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman and the ladies; which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm, when old Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions, which they called a reel.

All this time, Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skates on, with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr. Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skates than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet.

"Now, then, sir," said Sam, in an encouraging tone; "off vith you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop!" said Mr. Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arms with the grasp of a drowning man. "How slippery it is, Sam!"

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Hold up, sir!"

This last observation of Mr. Weller's bore reference to a demonstration Mr. Winkle made at the instant, of a frantic desire to throw his feet in the air, and dash the back of his head on the ice.

"These—these—are very awkward skates; ain't they, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering.

"I'm afeerd there's a orkard gen'l'm'n in 'em, sir," replied Sam.

"Now, Winkle," cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was anything the matter. "Come; the ladies are all anxiety."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile, "I'm coming."

"Just a goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavoring to disengage himself. "Now, sir, start off!"

"Stop an instant, Sam," gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. "I find I've got a couple of coats at home that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam."

"Thank'ee. sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Never mind touching your hat, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, hastily. "You needn't take your hand away

to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas-box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam."

"You're wery good, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Just hold me at first, Sam; will you?" said Mr. Winkle. "There—that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast."

Mr. Winkle stooping forward, with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and un-swan-like manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the opposite bank:

"Sam!"

"Sir?"

"Here. I want you."

"Let go, sir," said Sam. "Don't you hear the governor a callin'? Let go, sir."

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonized Pickwickian, and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have insured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reel, at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to

his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far to wise to do anything of the kind, in skates. He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic efforts to smile: but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance.

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

"Not much," said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

"I wish you'd let me bleed you," said Mr. Benjamin, with great eagerness.

"No, thank you," replied Mr. Winkle hurriedly.

"I really think you had better," said Allen.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Winkle; "I'd rather not."

"What do *you* think, Mr. Pickwick?" inquired Bob Sawyer.

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned Mr. Weller, and said in a stern voice, "Take his skates off."

"No; but really I had scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr. Winkle.

"Take his skates off," repeated Mr. Pickwick firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it in silence.

"Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise.

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the

by-standers; and, beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low, but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words:

"You're a humbug, sir."

"A what?" said Mr. Winkle, starting.

"A humbug, sir. I will speak plainly, if you wish it. An imposter, sir."

With those words, Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends.

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The birds, who, happily for their own peace of mind and personal comfort, were in blissful ignorance of the preparations which had been making to astonish them, on the first of September, hailed it no doubt, as one of the pleasantest mornings they had seen that season. Many a young partridge who strutted complacently among the stubble, with all the finicking coxcombry of youth, and many an older one who watched his levity out of his little round eye, with the contemptuous air of a bird of wisdom and experience, alike unconscious of their approaching doom, basked in the fresh morning air with lively and blithesome feelings, and a few hours afterwards were laid low upon the earth. But we grow affecting: let us proceed.

In plain common-place matter-of-fact, then, it was

a fine morning—so fine that you would scarcely have believed that the few months of an English summer had yet flown by. Hedges, fields, and trees, hill and moorland, presented to the eye their ever-varying shades of deep rich green; scarce a leaf had fallen, scarce a sprinkle of yellow mingled with the hues of summer, warned you that autumn had begun. The sky was cloudless; the sun shone out bright and warm; the songs of birds, and hum of myriads of summer insects, filled the air; and the cottage gardens, crowded with flowers of every rich and beautiful tint, sparkled, in the heavy dew, like beds of glittering jewels. Everything bore the stamp of summer, and none of its beautiful colors had yet faded from the die.

Such was the morning, when the open carriage, in which were three Pickwickians (Mr. Snodgrass having preferred to remain at home), Mr. Wardle, and Mr. Trundle, with Sam Weller on the box beside the driver, pulled up by a gate at the road-side, before which stood a tall, raw-boned gamekeeper, and a half-booted, leather-leggined boy; each bearing a bag of capacious dimensions, and accompanied by a brace of pointers.

"I say," whispered Mr. Winkle to Wardle, as the man let down the steps, "they don't suppose we're going to kill game enough to fill those bags, do they?"

"Fill them!" exclaimed old Wardle. "Bless you, yes! You shall fill one, and I the other; and when we've done with them, the pockets of our shooting-jackets will hold as much more."

Mr. Winkle dismounted without saying anything in reply to this observation; but he thought within himself, that if the party remained in the open air, until he had filled one of the bags, they stood a considerable chance of catching colds in their heads.

"Hi, Juno, lass—hi, old girl; down, Daph, down," said Wardle, caressing the dogs. "Sir Geoffrey still in Scotland, of course, Martin?"

The tall gamekeeper replied in the affirmative, and looked with some surprise from Mr. Winkle, who was holding his gun as if he wished his coat-pocket to save him the trouble of pulling the trigger, to Mr. Tupman, who was holding his as if he were afraid of it—as there is no earthly reason to doubt he really was.

"My friends are not much in the way of this sort of thing yet, Martin," said Wardle, noticing the look. "Live and learn, you know. They'll be good shots one of these days. I beg my friend Winkle's pardon, though; he has had some practice."

Mr. Winkle smiled feebly over his blue neckerchief in acknowledgment of the compliment, and got himself so mysteriously entangled with his gun, in his modest confusion, that if the piece had been

loaded, he must inevitably have shot himself dead upon the spot.

"You mustn't handle your piece in that ere way, when you come to have the charge in it, sir," said the tall gamekeeper, gruffly, "or I'm damned if you won't make cold meat of some on us."

Mr. Winkle, thus admonished, abruptly altered its position, and in so doing, contrived to bring the barrel into pretty sharp contact with Mr. Weller's head.

"Hallo!" said Sam, picking up his hat, which had been knocked off, and rubbing his temple. "Hallo, sir! if you comes it this vay, you'll fill one o' them bags, and something to spare, at one fire."

Here the leather-leggined boy laughed very heartily, and then tried to look as if it was somebody else, whereat Mr. Winkle frowned majestically.

"Where did you tell the boy to meet us with a snack, Martin?" inquired Wardle.

"Side of One-tree Hill, at twelve o'clock, sir."

"That's not Sir Geoffrey's land, is it?"

"No, sir; but it's close by it. It's Captain Boldwig's land; but there'll be nobody to interrupt us, and there's a fine bit of turf there."

"Very well," said old Wardle. "Now the sooner we're off the better. Will you join us at twelve then, Pickwick?"

Mr. Pickwick was particularly desirous to view the sport, the more especially as he was rather anxious

in respect of Mr. Winkle's life and limbs. On so inviting a morning, too, it was very tantalizing to turn back, and leave his friends to enjoy themselves. It was, therefore, with a very rueful air that he replied.

"Why, I suppose I must."

"An't the gentleman a shot, sir?" inquired the long gamekeeper.

"No," replied Wardle; "and he's lame besides."

"I should very much like to go," said Mr. Pickwick, "very much."

There was a short pause of commisseration.

"There's a barrow t'other side of the hedge," said the boy. "If the gentleman's servant would wheel along the paths, he could keep nigh us, and we could lift it over the stiles, and that.

"The wery thing," said Mr. Weller, who was a party interested, inasmuch as he ardently longed to see the sport. "The wery thing. Well said, Smallcheck; I'll have it out in a minute."

But here a difficulty arose. The long gamekeeper resolutely protested against the introduction into a shooting party, of a gentleman in a barrow, as a gross violation of all established rules and precedents.

It was a great objection, but not an unsurmountable one. The gamekeeper having been coaxed and fee'd, and having, moreover, eased his mind by

"punching" the head of the inventive youth who had first suggested the use of the machine, Mr. Pickwick was placed in it, and off the party set; Wardle and the long gamekeeper leading the way, and Mr. Pickwick in the barrow, propelled by Sam, bringing up in the rear.

"Stop, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, when they had got half across the first field.

"What's the matter now?" said Wardle.

"I won't suffer this barrow to be moved another step," said Mr. Pickwick, resolutely, "unless Winkle carries that gun of his in a different manner."

"How *am* I to carry it?" said the wretched Winkle.

"Carry it with the muzzle to the ground," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"It's so unsportsman-like," reasoned Winkle.

"I don't care whether it's unsportsman-like or not," replied Mr. Pickwick; "I am not going to be shot in a wheel-barrow, for the sake of appearances, to please anybody."

"I know the gentleman'll put that ere charge into somebody afore he's done," growled the long man.

"Well, well—I don't mind," said poor Winkle, turning his gun-stock uppermost:—"there."

"Anythin' for a quiet life," said Mr. Weller; and on they went again.

"Stop!" said Mr. Pickwick, after they had gone a few yards further.

"What now?" said Wardle.

"That gun of Tupman's is not safe; I know it isn't," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Eh? What! not safe?" said Mr. Tupman, in a tone of great alarm.

"Not as you are carrying it," said Mr. Pickwick. "I am very sorry to make any further objection, but I cannot consent to go on, unless you carry it as Winkle does his."

"I think you had better sir," said the long gamekeeper, "or you're quite as likely to lodge the charge in yourself as in anything else."

Mr. Tupman, with the most obliging haste, placed his piece in the position required, and the party moved on again; the two amateurs marching with reversed arms, like a couple of privates at a royal funeral.

The dogs suddenly came to a dead stop, and the party advancing stealthily a single pace, stopped too.

"What's the matter with the dogs' legs?" whispered Mr. Winkle. "How queer they're standing."

"Hush, can't you?" replied Wardle, softly. "Don't you see they're making a point?"

"Making a point!" said Mr. Winkle, staring about him, as if he expected to discover some particular beauty in the landscape, which the sagacious animals

were calling special attention to. "Making a point! What are they pointing at?"

"Keep your eyes open," said Wardle, not heeding the question in the excitement of the moment. "Now then."

There was a sharp whirring noise, that made Mr. Winkle start back as if he had been shot himself. Bang, bang, went a couple of guns;—the smoke swept quickly away over the field, and curled into the air.

"Where are they?" said Mr. Winkle, in a state of the highest excitement, turning round and round in all directions. "Where are they? Tell me when to fire. Where are they—where are they?"

"Where are they?" said Wardle, taking up a brace of birds which the dogs had deposited at his feet. "Why here they are."

"No, no; I mean the others," said the bewildered Winkle.

"Far enough off, by this time," replied Wardle, coolly reloading his gun.

"We shall very likely be up with another covey in five minutes," said the long gamekeeper. "If the gentleman begins to fire now, perhaps he'll just get the shot out of the barrel by the time they rise."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Mr. Weller.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, compassionating his follower's confusion and embarrassment.

"Sir."

"Don't laugh."

"Certainly not, sir." So, by the way of indemnification, Mr. Weller contorted his features from behind the wheelbarrow, for the exclusive amusement of the boy with the leggins, who thereupon burst into a boisterous laugh, and was summarily cuffed by the long gamekeeper, who wanted a pretext for turning round, to hide his own merriment.

"Bravo, old fellow!" said Wardle to Mr. Tupman; "you fired that time, at all events."

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Tupman, with conscious pride. "I let it off."

"Well done. You'll hit something next time, if you look sharp. Very easy, ain't it?"

"Yes, it's very easy," said Mr. Tupman. "How it hurts one's shoulder, though. It nearly knocked me backwards. I had no idea these small fire-arms kicked so."

"Ah," said the old gentleman, smiling; "you'll get used to it in time. Now then—all ready—all right with the barrow there?"

"All right, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Come along, then."

"Hold hard, sir," said Sam, raising the barrow.

"Aye, aye," replied Mr. Pickwick; and on they went, as briskly as need be.

"Keep that barrow back now," cried Wardle when it had been hoisted over a stile into another field,

and Mr. Pickwick had been deposited in it once more.

"All right, sir," replied Mr. Weller, pausing.

"Now, Winkle," said the old gentleman, "follow me softly, and don't be too late this time."

"Never fear," said Mr. Winkle. "Are they pointing?"

"No, no; not now. Quietly now, quietly." On they crept, and very quietly they would have advanced, if Mr. Winkle, in the performance of some very intricate evolutions with his gun, had not accidentally fired, at the most critical moment, over the boy's head, exactly in the very spot where the tall man's brain would have been, had he been there instead.

"Why, what on earth did you do that for?" said old Wardle, as the birds flew unharmed away.

"I never saw such a gun in my life," replied poor Mr. Winkle, looking at the lock, as if that would do any good. "It goes off of its own accord. It *will* do it."

"Will do it!" echoed Wardle, with something of irritation in his manner. "I wish it would kill something of its own accord."

"It'll do that before long, sir," observed the tall man, in a low, prophetic voice.

"What do you mean by that observation, sir?" inquired Mr. Winkle, angrily.

"Never mind, sir, never mind," replied the long gamekeeper; "I've no family myself, sir; and this here boy's mother will get something handsome from Sir Geoffrey, if he's killed on his land. Load again, sir, load again."

"Take away his gun," cried Mr. Pickwick from the barrow, horror-stricken at the long man's dark insinuations. "Take away his gun, do you hear, somebody?"

Nobody, however, volunteered to obey the command; and Mr. Winkle, after darting a rebellious glance at Mr. Pickwick, reloaded his gun, and proceeded onwards with the rest.

We are bound, on the authority of Mr. Pickwick, to state, that Mr. Tupman's mode of proceeding evinced far more of prudence and deliberation, than that adopted by Mr. Winkle. Still, this by no means detracts from the great authority of the latter gentleman, on all matters connected with the field, because, as Mr. Pickwick beautifully observes, it has somehow or other happened, from time immemorial, that many of the best and ablest philosophers, who have been perfect lights of science in matters of theory, have been wholly unable to reduce them to practice.

Mr. Tupman's process, like many of our most sublime discoveries, was extremely simple. With the quickness and penetration of a man of genius, he

had at once observed that the two great points to be attained were—first, to discharge his piece without injury to himself, and, secondly, to do so, without danger to the by-standers;—obviously, the best thing to do, after surmounting the difficulty of firing at all, was to shut his eyes firmly, and fire into the air.

On one occasion, after performing this feat, Mr. Tupman, on opening his eyes, beheld a plump partridge in the act of falling wounded to the ground. He was on the point of congratulating Mr. Wardle on his invariable success, when that gentleman advanced toward him, and grasped him warmly by the hand.

"Tupman," said the old gentleman, "you singled out that particular bird?"

"No," said Mr. Tupman—"no."

"You did," said Wardle. "I saw you do it—I observed you pick him out—I noticed you, as you raised your piece to take aim; and I will say this, that the best shot in existence could not have done it more beautifully. You are an older hand at this, than I thought you, Tupman, you have been out before."

It was in vain for Mr. Tupman to protest, with a smile of half-denial, that he never had. The very smile was taken as evidence to the contrary; and from that time forth, his reputation was established. It is not the only reputation that has been acquired

as easily, nor are such fortunate circumstances confined to partridge-shooting.

Meanwhile, Mr. Winkle flashed, and blazed, and smoked away, without producing any material results worthy of being noted down; sometimes expending his charge in mid-air, and at others sending it skimming along so near the surface of the ground as to place the lives of the two dogs on a rather uncertain and precarious tenure. As a display of fancy shooting, it was extremely varied and curious; as an exhibition of firing with any precise object, it was, upon the whole, perhaps a failure. It is an established axiom, that "every bullet has its billet." If it apply in an equal degree to shot, those of Mr. Winkle were unfortunate foundlings, deprived of their natural rights, cast loose upon the world, and billeted nowhere.

"Well," said Wardle, walking up to the side of the barrow, and wiping the streams of perspiration from his jolly red face; "smoking day, isn't it?"

"It is, indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick. "The sun is tremendously hot, even to me. I don't know how you must feel it."

"Why," said the old gentleman, "pretty hot. It's past twelve, though. You see that green hill there?"

"Certainly."

"That's the place where we are to lunch; and, by

Jove, there's the boy with the basket, punctual as clock-work !"

"So he is," said Mr. Pickwick, brightening up. "Good boy, that. I'll give him a shilling presently. Now, then, Sam, wheel away."

"Hold on, sir," said Mr. Weller, invigorated with the prospect of refreshments.

"Out of the way, young leathers. If you walley my precious life, don't upset me, as the gen'l'm'n said to the driver when they was a carryin' him to Tyburn." And quickening his pace to a sharp run, Mr. Weller wheeled his master nimbly to the green hill, shot him dexterously out by the very side of the basket, and proceeded to unpack it with the utmost dispatch.

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"Now, about Manor Farm," said Mr. Pickwick. "How shall we go ?"

"We had better consult the waiter, perhaps," said Mr. Tupman, and the waiter was summoned accordingly.

"Dingley Dell, gentlemen—fifteen miles, gentlemen—cross road—post-chaise, sir ?"

"Post-chaise won't hold more than two," said Mr. Pickwick.

"True, sir—beg your pardon, sir.—Very nice four-wheeled chaise, sir—seat for two behind—one in front

for the gentleman that drives—oh ! beg your pardon sir—that'll only hold three."

"What's to be done?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Perhaps one of the gentlemen would like to ride, sir?" suggested the waiter, looking toward Mr. Winkle; "very good saddle horses, sir—any of Mr. Wardle's men coming to Rochester, bring 'em back, sir."

"The very thing," said Mr. Pickwick. "Winkle, will you go on horseback?"

Mr. Winkle did entertain considerable misgivings in the very lowest recesses of his own heart, relative to his equestrian skill; but, as he would not have them even suspected on any account, he at once replied with great hardihood, "Certainly. I should enjoy it, of all things."

Mr. Winkle had rushed upon his fate; there was no resource. "Let them be at the door by eleven," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very well, sir," replied the waiter.

The waiter retired; the breakfast concluded; and the travelers ascended to their respective bed-rooms, to prepare a change of clothing, to take with them on their approaching expedition.

Mr. Pickwick had made his preliminary arrangements, and was looking over the coffee-room blinds at the passengers in the street, when the waiter entered, and announced that the chaise was ready—

an announcement which the vehicle itself confirmed, by forthwith appearing before the coffee-room blinds aforesaid.

It was a curious little green box on four wheels, with a low place like a wine-bin for two behind, and an elevated perch for one in front, drawn by an immense brown horse, displaying great symmetry of bone. An hostler stood near, holding by the bridle another immense horse—apparently a near relative of the animal in the chaise—ready saddled for Mr. Winkle.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Pickwick, as they stood upon the pavement while the coats were being put in. "Bless my soul! who's to drive? I never thought of that."

"Oh! you, of course," said Mr. Tupman.

"Of course," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"I!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Not the slightest fear, sir," interposed the hostler. "Warrant him quiet, sir; a hinfant in arms might drive him."

"He don't shy, does he?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Shy, sir?—He wouldn't shy if he was to meet a vaggin-load of monkeys with their tails burnt off."

The last recommendation was indisputable. Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass got into the bin; Mr. Pickwick ascended to his perch, and deposited his

feet on a floor-clothed shelf, erected beneath it for that purpose.

"Now, shiny Villiam," said the hostler to the deputy hostler, "give the gen'lm'n the ribbins." "Shiny Villiam"—so called, probably, from his sleek hair and oily countenance—placed the reins in Mr. Pickwick's left hand; and the upper hostler thrust a whip into his right.

"Wo—o!" cried Mr. Pickwick, as the tall quadruped evinced a decided inclination to back into the coffee-room window.

"Wo—o!" echoed Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass, from the bin.

"Only his playfulness, gen'lm'n," said the head hostler encouragingly; "jist kitch hold on him, Villiam." The deputy restrained the animal's impetuosity, and the principal ran to assist Mr. Winkle in mounting

"T'other side, sir, if you please."

"Blowed if the gen'lm'n worn't a gettin' up on the wrong side," whispered a grinning post-boy, to the inexpressibly gratified waiter.

Mr. Winkle, thus instructed, climbed into his saddle, with about as much difficulty as he would have experienced in getting up the side of a first-rate man-of-war.

"All right?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, with an inward presentiment that it was all wrong.

Masterpieces—Dickens. SAM WELLER AND HIS SON.

"All right," replied Mr. Winkle faintly.

"Let 'em go," cried the hostler. "Hold him in, sir," and away went the chaise, and the saddle-horse, with Mr. Pickwick on the box of the one, and Mr. Winkle on the back of the other, to the delight and gratification of the whole inn yard.

"What makes him go sideways?" said Mr. Snodgrass in the bin, to Mr. Winkle in the saddle.

"I can't imagine," replied Mr. Winkle. His horse was drifting up the street in the most mysterious manner—side first, with his head toward one side of the way, and his tail toward the other.

Mr. Pickwick had no leisure to observe either this or any other particular, the whole of his faculties being concentrated in the management of the animal attached to the chaise, who displayed various peculiarities, highly interesting to a by-stander, but by no means equally amusing to any one seated behind him. Besides constantly jerking his head up in a very unpleasant and uncomfortable manner, and tugging at the reins to an extent which rendered it a matter of great difficulty for Mr. Pickwick to hold them, he had a singular propensity for darting suddenly every now and then to the side of the road, then stopping short, and then rushing forward for some minutes, at a speed which it was wholly impossible to control.

"What *can* he mean by this?" said Mr. Snod-

grass, when the horse had executed this manœuvre for the twentieth time.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Tupman; "It *looks* very like shying, don't it?" Mr. Snodgrass was about to reply, when he was interrupted by a shout from Mr. Pickwick.

"Wo-o!" said that gentleman; "I have dropped my whip."

"Winkle," said Mr. Snodgrass, as the equestrian came trotting up on the tall horse, with his hat over his ears, and shaking all over, as if he would shake to pieces, with the violence of the exercise, "pick up the whip, there's a good fellow." Mr. Winkle pulled at the bridle of the tall horse till he was black in the face; and having at length succeeded in stopping him, dismounted, handed the whip to Mr. Pickwick, and grasping the reins, prepared to re mount.

Now whether the tall horse, in the natural playfulness of his disposition, was desirous of having a little innocent recreation with Mr. Winkle, or whether it occurred to him that he could perform the journey as much to his own satisfaction without a rider as with one, are points upon which, of course, we can arrive at no definite and distinct conclusion. By whatever motives the animal was actuated, certain it is that Mr. Winkle had no sooner touched the reins, than he slipped them over his head, and darted backwards to their full length.

"Poor fellow," said Mr. Winkle, soothingly,—"poor fellow—good old horse." The "poor fellow" was proof against flattery; the more Mr. Winkle tried to get nearer him, the more he sidled away; and, notwithstanding all kinds of coaxing and wheedling, there were Mr. Winkle and the horse going round and round each other for ten minutes, at the end of which time each was at precisely the same distance from the other as when they first commenced—an unsatisfactory sort of thing under any circumstances, but particularly so in a lonely road, where no assistance can be procured.

"What am I to do?" shouted Mr. Winkle, after the dodging had been prolonged for a considerable time. "What am I to do? I can't get on him."

"You had better lead him till we come to a turnpike," replied Mr. Pickwick from the chaise.

"But he won't come!" roared Mr. Winkle. "Do come and hold him."

Mr. Pickwick was the very personation of kindness and humanity; he threw the reins on the horse's back, and having descended from his seat, carefully drew the chaise into the hedge, lest anything should come along the road, and stepped back to the assistance of his distressed companion, leaving Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass in the vehicle.

The horse no sooner beheld Mr. Pickwick advancing toward him with the chaise whip in his hand,

than he exchanged the rotatory motion in which he had previously indulged, for a retrograde movement of so very determined a character, that it at once drew Mr. Winkle, who was still at the end of the bridle, at a rather quicker rate than fast walking, in the direction from which they had just come. Mr. Pickwick ran to his assistance; but the faster Mr. Pickwick ran forward, the faster the horse ran backward. There was a great scraping of feet, and kicking up of the dust; and at last Mr. Winkle, his arms being nearly pulled out of their sockets, fairly let go his hold. The horse paused, stared, shook his head, turned round, and quietly trotted home to Rochester, leaving Mr. Winkle and Mr. Pickwick gazing on each other with countenances of blank dismay. A rattling noise at a little distance attracted their attention. They looked up.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the agonized Mr. Pickwick, "there's the other horse running away!"

It was but too true. The animal was startled by the noise, and the reins were on his back. The result may be guessed. He tore off with the four-wheeled chaise behind him, and Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass in the four-wheeled chaise. The heat was a short one. Mr. Tupman threw himself into the hedge, Mr. Snodgrass followed his example, the horse dashed the four-wheeled chaise against a wooden bridge, separated the wheels from the body,

and the bin from the perch; and finally stood stock still to gaze upon the ruin he had made.

The first care of the two unspilt friends was to extricate their unfortunate companions from their bed of quickset—a process which gave them the unspeakable satisfaction of discovering that they had sustained no injury, beyond sundry rents in their garments, and various lacerations from the brambles. The next thing to be done was to unharness the horse. This complicated process having been effected, the party walked slowly forward, leading the horse among them, and abandoning the chaise to its fate.

BLEAK HOUSE.

BLEAK HOUSE.

IT is the long vacation in the regions of Chancery Lane. The good ships *Law* and *Equity*, those teak-built, copper-bottomed, iron-fastened, brazen-faced, and not by any means fast sailing clippers, are laid up in ordinary The *Flying Dutchman*, with a crew of ghostly clients imploring all whom they may encounter to peruse their papers, has drifted, for the time being, Heaven knows where. The courts are all shut up ; the public offices lie in a hot sleep ; Westminster Hall itself is a shady solitude where nightingales might sing, and a tenderer class of suitors than is usually found there, walk. . . .

It is the hottest long vacation known for many years. All the young clerks are madly in love, and, according to their various degrees, pine for bliss with the beloved object, at Margate, Ramsgate, or Gravesend. All the middle-aged clerks think their families too large. All the unowned dogs who stray into the Inns of Court, and pant about staircases and other dry places seeking water, give short howls of aggra-

vation. All the blind men's dogs in the streets draw their masters against pumps, or trip them over buckets. A shop with a sun-blind, and a watered pavement, and a bowl of gold and silver fish in the window, is a sanctuary. Temple Bar gets so hot, that it is, to the adjacent Strand and Fleet Street, what a heater is in an urn, and keeps them simmering all night. . . . . .

Over all the legal neighborhood, there hangs, like some great veil of rust, or gigantic cobweb, the idleness and pensiveness of the long vacation. Mr. Snagsby, law-stationer of Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, is sensible of the influence; not only in his mind as a sympathetic and contemplative man, but also in his business as a law-stationer aforesaid. He has more leisure for musing in Staple Inn and in the Rolls Yard, during the long vacation, than of other seasons; and he says to the two 'prentices, what a thing it is in such hot weather to think that you live in an island, with the sea a-rolling and a-bowling right round you.

Guster is busy in the little drawingroom, on this present afternoon in the long vacation, when Mr. and Mrs. Snagsby have it in contemplation to receive company. The expected guests are rather select than numerous, being Mr. and Mrs. Chadband, and no more.

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At this period of the entertainment, Guster, who has never recovered her first failure, but has neglected no possible or impossible means of bringing the establishment and herself into contempt—among which may be briefly enumerated her unexpectedly performing clashing military music on Mr. Chadband's head with plates, and afterward crowning that gentleman with muffins—at this period of the enteriainment Guster whispers Mr. Snagsby that he is wanted.

"And being wanted in the—not to put too fine a point upon it—in the shop," says Mr. Snagsby, rising, "perhaps this good company will excuse me for half a minute."

Mr. Snagsby descends, and finds the two 'prentices intently contemplating a police constable, who holds a ragged boy by the arm.

"Why, bless my heart," says Mr. Snagsby, "what's the matter?"

"This boy," says the constable, "although he's repeatedly told to, won't move on——"

"I'm always a-moving on, sir," cries the boy wiping away his grimy tears with his arm. "I've always been a-moving and a-moving on, ever since I was born. Where can I possibly move to, sir, more nor I do move?"

"He won't move on," says the constable, calmly, with a slight professional hitch of his neck involving

its better settlement in his stiff stock, "although he has been repeatedly cautioned, and therefore I'm obliged to take him into custody. He's as obstinate a young gonoph as I know. He WON'T move on.'

"Oh, my eye! Where can I move to?" cries the boy, clutching quite desperately at his hair, and beating his bare feet upon the floor of Mr. Snagsby's passage.

"Don't you come none of that, or I shall make blessed short work of you!" says the constable, giving him a passionless shake. "My instructions are that you are to move on. I have told you so five hundred times."

"But where?" cries the boy.

"Well! Really, constable, you know," says Mr. Snagsby wistfully, and coughing behind his hand his cough of great perplexity and doubt: "really that does seem a question. Where, you know?"

"My instructions don't go to that," replies the constable. "My instructions are that this boy is to move on."

Do you hear, Jo? It is nothing to you or to any one else, that the great lights of the parliamentary sky have failed for some few years, in this business, to set you the example of moving on. The one grand recipe remains for you—the profound philosophical prescription—the be-all and the end-all of your strange existence upon earth. Move on! You are

by no means to move off, Jo, for the great lights can't at all agree about that. Move on!

Mr. Snagsby says nothing to this effect; says nothing at all, indeed; but coughs his forlornest cough, expressive of no thoroughfare in any direction. By this time, Mr. and Mrs. Chadband, and Mrs. Snagsby, hearing the altercation, have appeared upon the stairs. Guster having never left the end of the passage, the whole household are assembled.

"The simple question is, sir," says the constable, "whether you know this boy. He says you do."

Mrs. Snagsby, from her elevation, instantly cries out, "No he don't!"

"My lit-tle woman!" says Mr. Snagsby, looking up the stair-case. "My love, permit me! Pray have a moment's patience, my dear. I do know something of this lad, and in what I know of him, I can't say that there's any harm; perhaps on the contrary, constable."

"Well!" says the constable, "so far, it seems, he had grounds for what he said. When I took him into custody up in Holborn, he said you knew him. Upon that, a young man who was in the crowd said he was acquainted with you, and you were a respectable housekeeper, and if I'd call and make the inquiry he'd appear. The young man don't seem inclined to keep his word, but—oh! Here *is* the young man!"

Enter Mr. Guppy, who nods to Mr. Snagsby, and touches his hat with the chivalry of clerkship to the ladies on the stairs.

"I was strolling away from the office just now, when I found this row going on," says Mr. Guppy to the law-stationer; "and as your name was mentioned, I thought it was right the thing should be looked into."

"It was very good-natured of you, sir," says Mr. Snagsby, "and I am obliged to you." And Mr Snagsby again relates his experience.

"Now, I know where you live," says the constable, then, to Jo. "You live down in Tom-all-alone's. That's a nice innocent place to live in, ain't it?"

"I can't go and live in no nicer place, sir," replies Jo. "They wouldn't have nothink to say to me if I was to go to a nice innocent place fur to live. Who ud go and let a nice innocent lodging to such a reg'lar one as me?"

"You are very poor, ain't you?" says the constable.

"Yes, I am, indeed, sir, wery poor in gin'ral," replies Jo.

"I leave you to judge now! I shook these two half-crowns out of him," says the constable, producing them to the company, "in only putting my hand upon him!"

"They're wot's left, Mr. Snagsby," says Jo, "out of a sov'ring as was give me by a lady in a wale as sed she was a servant and as come to my crossin' one night. . . . . .

"And I ain't had much of the sov'ring neither," says Jo, with dirty tears, "fur I had to pay five bob, down in Tom-all-alone's afore they'd square it fur to giv me change, and then a young man he thieved another five while I was asleep and another boy he thieved ninepence and the landlord he stood drains round with a lot more on it."

"You don't expect anybody to believe this, about the lady and the sovereign, do you?" said the constable, eying him aside with ineffable disdain.

"I don't know as I do, sir," replies Jo. "I don't expect nothing, at all, sir, much, but that's the true hist'ry on it."

"You see what he is!" the constable observes to the audience. "Well, Mr. Snagsby, if I don't lock him up this time, will you engage for his moving on?"

"No!" cries Mrs. Snagsby from the stairs.

"My little woman!" pleads her husband. "Constable, I have no doubt he'll move on. You know you really must do it," says Mr. Snagsby.

"I'm every ways agreeable, sir," says the hapless Jo."

"Do it then," observes the constable. "You know what you have to do. Do it! And recollect you

won't get off so easy next time. Catch hold of your money. Now, the sooner you're five miles off, the better for all parties."

With this farewell hint, and pointing to the setting sun, as a likely place to move on to, the constable bids his auditors good-afternoon; and makes the echoes of Cook's Court perform slow music for him as he walks away on the shady side, carrying his iron-bound hat in his hand for a little ventilation. . .

Jo moves on, through the long vacation, down to Blackfriars Bridge, where he finds a baking stony corner, wherein to settle to his repast.

And there he sits, munching and gnawing, and looking up at the great Cross on the summit of St. Paul's Cathedral, glittering above a red and violet-tinted cloud of smoke. From the boy's face one might suppose that sacred emblem to be, in his eyes, the crowning confusion of the great confused city; so golden, so high up, so far out of his reach. There he sits, the sun going down, the river running fast, the crowd flowing by him in two streams—everything moving on to some purpose and to one end—until he is stirred up, and told to "move on" too.

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Darkness rests upon Tom-all-alone's. Dilating and dilating since the sun went down last night, it has gradually swelled until it fills every void in

the place. For a time there were some dungeon lights burning, as the lamp of Life burns in Tom-all-alone's, heavily, heavily, in the nauseous air, and winking—as that lamp, too, winks in Tom-all-alone's —at many horrible things. But they are blotted out. The moon has dyed Tom with a dull cold stare, as admitting some puny emulation of herself in his desert region unfit for life and blasted by volcanic fires; but she has passed on and is gone. The blackest night-mare in the infernal stables gazes on Tom-all-alone's, and Tom is fast asleep. . . . .

It is a moot point whether Tom-all-alone's be uglier by day or by night; but on the argument that the more that is seen of it the more shocking it must be, and that no part of it left to imagination is at all likely to be made so bad as the reality, day carries it. The day begins to break now; and in truth it might be better for the national glory even that the sun should sometimes set upon the British dominions, than that it should ever rise upon so vile a wonder as Tom.

A brown sun-burned gentleman, who appears in some inaptitude for sleep to be wandering abroad rather than counting the hours on a restless pillow, strolls hitherward at this quiet time. Attracted by curiosity, he often pauses and looks about him, up and down the miserable by-ways. Nor is he merely curious, for in his bright dark eye there is compassionate interest; and as he looks here and there,

he seems to understand such wretchedness, and to have studied it before.

On the banks of the stagnant channel of mud which is the main street of Tom-all alone's, nothing is to be seen but the crazy houses, shut up and silent. No waking creature save himself appears, except in one direction, where he sees the solitary figure of a woman sitting on a door-step. He walks that way. Approaching, he observes that she has journeyed a long distance, and is foot-sore and travel-stained. She sits on the door-step in the manner of one who is waiting, with her elbow on her knee and her head upon her hand. Beside her is a canvas bag, or bundle, she has carried. She is dozing probably, for she gives no heed to his steps as he comes toward her.

The broken foot-way is so narrow, that when Allan Woodcourt comes to where the woman sits, he has to turn into the road to pass her. Looking down at her face, his eye meet hers, and he stops.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Can't you make them hear? Do you want to be let in?"

"I am waiting till they get up at another house—a lodging-house—not here," the woman patiently returns. "I am waiting here because there will be sun here presently to warm me."

"I am afraid you are tired. I am sorry to see you sitting in the street."

"Thank you sir. It don't matter."

A habit in him in speaking to the poor, and of avoiding patronage or condescension, or childishness (which is the favorite device, many people deeming it quite a subtlety to talk to them like little spelling-books), has put him on good terms with the woman easily.

"Let me look at your forehead," he says, bending down. "I am a doctor. Don't be afraid. I wouldn't hurt you for the world."

He knows that by touching her with his skillful and accustomed hand, he can soothe her yet more readily. She makes a slight objection, saying, "It's nothing;" but he has scarcely laid his fingers on the wounded place when she lifts it up to the light.

"Ay! A bad bruise, and the skin sadly broken. This must be very sore."

"It does ache a little, sir," returns the woman, with a started tear upon her cheek.

"Let me try to make it more comfortable. My handkerchief won't hurt you."

"Oh, dear no, sir, I'm sure of that!"

He cleanses the injured place and dries it; and having carefully examined it and gently pressed it with the palm of his hand, takes a small case from his pocket, dresses it, and binds it up. While he is

thus employed, he says, after laughing at his establishing a surgery in the street,

"So your husband is a brickmaker?"

"How do you know that, sir?" asked the woman, astonished.

"Why, I supposed so, from the color of the clay upon your bag and on your dress. And I know brick-makers go about working at piece-work in different places. And I am sorry to say I have known them cruel to their wives too."

The woman hastily lifts up her eyes as if she would deny that her injury is referable to such a cause. But feeling the hand upon her forehead, and seeing his composed face, she quietly drops them again.

"Where is he now?" asks the surgeon.

"He got into trouble last night, sir; but he'll look for me at the lodging-house."

"He will get into worse trouble if he often misuses his large and heavy hand as he has misused it here. But you forgive him, brutal as he is, and I say no more of him, except that I wish he deserved it."

By this time he has finished, and is putting up his case. "I suppose you have some settled home. Is it far from here?" he asks, good-humoredly making light of what he has done, as she gets up and courtesies.

"It's a good two or three-and-twenty miles from here, sir. At St. Albans. You know St. Albans,

sir? I thought you gave a start like, as if you did?"

"Yes, I know something of it. And now I will ask you a question in return. Have you money for your lodging?"

"Yes, sir," she says, "really and truly." And she shows it. He tells her in acknowledgment of her many subdued thanks, that she is very welcome, gives her good-day, and walks away. Tom-all-alone's is still asleep, and nothing is astir.

Yes, something is! As he retraces his way to the point from which he descried the woman at a distance sitting on the step, he sees a ragged figure coming very cautiously along, crouching close to the soiled walls—which the wretched figure might as well avoid—and furtively thrusting a hand before it. It is the figure of a youth, whose face is hollow, and whose eyes have an emaciated glare. He is so intent on getting along unseen, that even the apparition of a stranger in whole garments does not tempt him to look back. He shades his face with his ragged elbow as he passes on the other side of the way, and goes shrinking and creeping on, with his anxious hand before him, and his shapeless clothes hanging in shreds. Clothes made for what purpose, or of what material, it would be impossible to say. They look, in color and substance, like a bundle of rank leaves of swampy growth, that rotted long ago.

Allan Woodcourt pauses to look after him and note all this, with a shadowy belief that he has seen the boy before. He cannot recall how, or where, but there is some association in his mind with such a form. He imagines that he must have seen it in some hospital or refuge; still, cannot make out why it comes with any special force on his remembrance.

He is gradually emerging from Tom-all-alone's in the morning light, thinking about it, when he hears running feet behind him; and looking round, sees the boy scouring toward him at great speed, followed by the woman.

"Stop him, stop him!" cries the woman, almost breathless. "Stop him, sir!"

He darts across the road into the boy's path, but the boy is quicker than he—makes a curve—ducks—dives under his hands—comes up half a dozen yards beyond him, and scours away again. Still the woman follows, crying, "Stop him, sir, pray stop him!" Allan, not knowing but that he has just robbed her of her money, follows in chase, and runs so hard, that he runs the boy down a dozen times; but each time he repeats the curve, the duck, the dive, and scours away again. To strike at him on any of these occasions, would be to fell and disable him; but the pursuer cannot resolve to do that: and so the grimly ridiculous pursuit continues. At last the fugitive, hard-pressed, takes to a narrow passage,

and a court which has no thoroughfare. Here against a hoarding of decaying timber, he is brought to bay, and tumbles down, lying gasping at his pursuer, who stands and gasps at him until the woman comes up.

"Oh, you Jo!" cries the woman. "What! I have found you at last!" . . . .

"What has he done?" says Allan. "Has he robbed you?"

"No, sir, no. Robbed me? He did nothing but what was kind-hearted by me, and that's the wonder of it."

Allan looks from Jo to the woman, and from the woman to Jo, waiting for one of them to unravel the riddle.

"But he was along with me, sir," says the woman —"Oh, you Jo!—he was along with me, sir, down at St. Albans, ill, and a young lady, Lord bless her for a good friend to me, took pity on him when I durstn't, and took him home——"

"Yes, sir, yes. Took him home, and made him comfortable, and like a thankless monster he ran away in the night, and never has been seen or heard of since, till I set eyes on him just now. And that young lady that was such a pretty dear, caught his illness, lost her beautiful looks, and wouldn't hardly be known for the same young lady now, if it wasn't for her angel temper, and her pretty shape, and her

sweet voice. Do you know it? You ungrateful wretch, do you know that this is all along of you and of her goodness to you?" demands the woman, beginning to rage at him as she recalls it, and breaking into passionate tears.

The boy, in rough sort stunned by what he hears, falls to smearing his dirty forehead with his dirty palm, and to staring at the ground, and to shaking from head to foot until the crazy hoarding against which he leans, rattles.

Allan restrains the woman, merely by a quiet gesture, but effectually.

"You hear what she says. But get up, get up."

Jo, shaking and chattering, slowly rises, and stands, after the manner of his tribe in a difficulty, sideways against the hoarding, resting one of his high shoulders against it, and covertly rubbing his right hand over his left, and his left foot over his right.

"You hear what she says, and I know it's true. Have you been here ever since?"

"Wishermaydie if I seen Tom-all alone's till this blessed morning," replies Jo, hoarsely.

"Why have you come here now?"

Jo looks all round the confined court, looks at his questioner no higher than his knees, and finally answers:

"I don't know how to do nothink, and I can't get nothink to do. I'm wery poor and ill, and I thought

I'd come back here when there warn't nobody about, and lay down and hide somewheres as as I knows on till arter dark, and then go and beg a trifle of Mr. Snagsby. He wus allus willin' fur to give me somethink, he wos, though Mrs. Snagsby she wos allus a chivying on me—like everybody everywheres."

"Where have you come from?"

Jo looks all round the court again, looks at his questioner's knees again, and concludes by laying his profile against the hoarding in a sort of resignation.

"Did you hear me ask you where you have come from?"

"Tramp, then," says Jo.

"Now tell me," proceeds Allan, making a strong effort to overcome his repugnance, going very near to him, and leaning over him with an expression of confidence, "tell me how it came about that you left that house, when the good young lady had been so unfortunate as to pity you, and take you home."

Jo suddenly comes out of his resignation, and excitedly declares, addressing the woman, that he never known about the young lady, that he never heern about it, that he never went fur to hurt her, that he would sooner have hurt his own self, that he'd sooner have had his unfortnet ed chopped off than ever gone a-nigh her, and that she wos wery good to

him, she wos. Conducting himself throughout as if in his poor fashion he really meant it, and winding up with some very miserable sobs.

Allan Woodcourt sees that this is not a sham. He constrains himself to touch him. "Come, Jo. Tell me."

"No. I dustn't," says Jo, relapsing into the profile state. "I dustn't, or I would."

"But I must know," returns the other, "all the same. Come Jo."

After two or three such adjurations, Jo lifts up his head again, looks round the court again, and says in a low voice, "Well I'll tell you something. I wos took away. There!"

"Took away? In the night?"

"Ah!" Very apprehensive of being overheard, Jo looks about him, and even glances up some ten feet at the top of the hoarding, and through the cracks in it, lest the object of his distrust should be looking over, or hidden on the other side.

"Who took you away?"

"I dustn't name him," says Jo. "I dustn't do it, sir."

"But I want, in the young lady's name, to know. You may trust me. No one else shall hear."

"Ah, but I don't know," replies Jo, shaking his head fearfully, "as he *don't* hear."

"Why, he is not in this place."

"Oh, ain't he though?" says Jo. "He's in all manner of places, all at wanst."

Allan looks at him in perplexity, but discovers some real meaning and good faith at the bottom of this reply. He patiently awaits an explicit answer; and Jo, more baffled by his patience than by anything else, at last desperately whispers a name in his ear.

"Ay!" says Allan. "Why, what had you been doing?"

"Nothink, sir. Never done nothink to get myself into no trouble, 'cept in not moving on. But I'm a-moving on now. I'm a-moving on to the berryin'-ground—that's the move as I'm up to."

"No, no, we will try to prevent that. But what did he do with you?"

"Put me in a horsepittle," replied Jo, whispering, "till I was discharged, then giv me a little money—four half bulls, wot you may call half-crowns—and ses 'Hook it! Nobody wants you here,' he ses. 'You hook it. You go and tramp,' he ses. 'You move on,' he ses. 'Don't let me ever see you nowheres within forty miles of London, or you'll repent it.' So I shall, if ever he does see me, and he'll see me if I'm above ground," concludes Jo, nervously, repeating all his former precautions and investigations.

Allan considers a little; then remarks, turning to the woman, but keeping an encouraging eye on Jo, "He is not so ungrateful as you supposed. He had

a reason for going away, though it was an insufficient one."

"Thankee, sir, thankee!" exclaims Jo. "There now! See how hard you wos upon me. But only you tell the young lady wot the genlmn ses, and it's all right. For *you* wos very good to me too, and I knows it."

"Now, Jo," says Allan, keeping his eye upon him, "come with me, and I will find you a better place than this to lie down and hide in. If I take one side of the way and you the other to avoid observation, you will not run away, I know very well, if you make me a promise."

"I won't, not unless I wos to see *him* a-coming sir."

"Very well. I take your word. Half the town is getting up by this time, and the whole town will be broad awake in another hour. Come along. Good-day again, my good woman."

"Good-day again, sir, and I thank you kindly many times again."

She has been sitting on her bag, deeply attentive, and now rises and takes it up. Jo, repeating, "Ony you tell the young lady as I never went fur to hurt her and wot the genlmn ses!" nods and shambles and shivers, and smears and blinks, and half laughs and half cries, a farewell to her, and takes his creeping way along after Allan Woodcourt, close to the

houses on the opposite side of the street. In this order, the two come up out of Tom-all-alone's into the broad rays of the sunlight and the purer air.

. . . . . .

As Allan Woodcourt and Jo proceed along the streets, where the high church spires and the distances are so near and clear in the morning light that the city itself seems renewed by rest, Allan revolves in his mind how and where he shall bestow his companion. "It surely is a strange fact," he considers, "that in the heart of a civilized world this creature in human form should be more difficult to dispose of than an unknown dog." But it is none the less a fact because of its strangeness, and the difficulty remains.

At first, he looks behind him often, to assure himself that Jo is still really following. But, look where he will, he still beholds him close to the opposite houses, making his way with his wary hand from brick to brick and from door to door, and often, as he creeps along, glancing over at him, watchfully. Soon satisfied that the last thing in his thoughts is to give him the slip, Allan goes on; considering with a less divided attention what he shall do.

A breakfast-stall at a street corner suggests the first thing to be done. He stops there, looks round, and beckons Jo. Jo crosses, and comes halting and shuffling up, slowly scooping the knuckles of his right

hand round and round in the hollowed palm of his left—kneading dirt with a natural pestle and mortar. What is a dainty repast to Jo is then set before him, and he begins to gulp the coffee, and to gnaw the bread-and-butter: looking anxiously about him in all directions as he eats and drinks, like a scared animal.

But he is so sick and miserable, that even hunger has abandoned him. "I thought I was a-most a-starvin, sir," says Jo, soon putting down his food; "but I don't know nothing—not even that. I don't care for eating wittles nor yet for drinking on 'em." And Jo stands shivering, and looking at the breakfast wonderingly.

Allan Woodcourt lays his hand upon his pulse, and on his chest. "Draw breath, Jo."

"It draws," says Jo, "as heavy as a cart." He might add, "and rattles like it;" but he only mutters, "I'm a-movin on, sir."

Allan looks about for an apothecary's shop. There is none at hand, but a tavern does as well or better. He obtains a little measure of wine, and gives the lad a portion of it very carefully. He begins to revive almost as soon as it passes his lips. "We may repeat that dose, Jo," observes Allan, after watching him with his attentive face. "So! Now we will take five minutes' rest, and then go on again."

Leaving the boy sitting on the bench of the break-

fast-stall, with his back against an iron railing, Allan Woodcourt paces up and down in the early sunshine, casting an occasional look toward him without appearing to watch him. It requires no discernment to perceive that he is warmed and refreshed. If a face so shaded can brighten, his face brightens somewhat; and, by little and little, he eats the slice of bread he had so hopelessly laid down. Observant of these signs of improvement, Allan engages him in conversation; and elicits to his no small wonder the adventure of the lady in the veil, with all its consequences. Jo slowly munches, as he slowly tells it. When he has finished his story and his bread, they go on again.

Intending to refer his difficulty in finding a temporary place of refuge for the boy, to his old patient, zealous little Miss Flite, Allan leads the way to the court where he and Jo first fore-gathered. But all is changed at the rag-and-bottle shop; Miss Flite no longer lodges there; it is shut up; and a hard-featured female, much obscured by dust, whose age is a problem—is tart and spare in her replies. These sufficing, however, to inform the visitor that Miss Flite and her birds are domiciled with a Mrs. Blinder in Bell yard, he repairs to that neighboring place; where Miss Flite comes running down-stairs, with tears of welcome and open arms.

"My dear physician!" cries Miss Flite. "My

meritorious, distinguished honorable officer!" she uses some odd expressions, but is as cordial and full of heart as sanity itself can be—more so than it often is. Allan, very patient with her, waits until she has no more raptures to express, then points out Jo, trembling in a doorway, and tells her how he comes there.

"Where can I lodge him hereabouts for the present? Now you have a fund of knowledge and good sense, and can advise me"

Miss Flite, mighty proud of the compliment, sets herself to consider; but it is long before a bright thought occurs to her. Mrs. Blinder is entirely let, and she herself occupies poor Gridley's room. "Gridley!" exclaims Miss Flite, clapping her hands, after a twentieth repetition of this remark. "Gridley! To be sure! of course! My dear physician! General George will help us out."

It is hopeless to ask for any information about General George, and would be, though Miss Flite had not already run up-stairs to put on her pinched bonnet and her poor little shawl, and to arm herself with her reticule of documents. But as she informs her physician, in her disjointed manner, on coming down in full array, that General George, whom she often calls upon, knows her dear Fitz-Jarndyce, and takes a great interest in all connected with her, Allan is induced to think that they may be in the right way.

So he tells Jo, for his encouragement, that this walking about will soon be over now; and they repair to the General's. Fortunately it is not far.

From the exterior of George's Shooting-Gallery, and the long entry, and the bare perspective beyond it, Allan Woodcourt augurs well. He also descries promise in the figure of Mr. George himself, striding toward them in his morning exercise with his pipe in his mouth, no stock on, and his muscular arms, developed by broad-sword and dumb-bell, weightily asserting themselves through his light shirtsleeves

"Your servant, sir," says Mr. George, with a military salute. Good-humoredly smiling all over his broad forehead up into his crisp hair, he then defers to Miss Flite, as, with great stateliness, and at some length she performs the courtly ceremony of presentation. He winds it up with another "Your servant, sir!" and another salute.

"Excuse me, sir. A sailor, I believe?" says Mr. George.

"I am proud to find I have the air of one," returns Allan; "but I am only a sea-going doctor."

"Indeed, sir! I should have thought you was a regular blue-jacket, myself."

Allan hopes Mr. George will forgive his intrusion the more readily on that account, and particularly that he will not lay aside his pipe, which, in his politeness, he has testified some intention of doing.

"You are very good, sir," returns the trooper. "As I know, by experience, that it's not disagreeable to Miss Flite, and since it's equally agreeable to yourself——" and finishes the sentence by putting it between his lips again. Allan proceeds to tell him all he knows about Jo; unto which the trooper listens with a grave face.

"And that's the lad, sir, is it?" he inquires, looking along the entry to where Jo stands staring up at the great letters on the whitewashed front, which have no meaning in his eyes.

"That's he," says Allan. "And, Mr. George, I am in this difficulty about him. I am unwilling to place him in a hospital, even if I could procure him immediate admission, because I foresee that he would not stay there many hours, if he could be so much as got there. The same objection applies to a workhouse; supposing I had the patience to be evaded and shirked, and handed about from post to pillar in trying to get him into one—which is a system that I don't take kindly to."

"No man does, sir," returns Mr. George.

"I am convinced that he would not remain in either place, because he is possessed by an extraordinary terror of this person who ordered him to keep out of the way; in his ignorance, he believes this person to be everywhere, and cognizant of everything."

"I ask your pardon," says Mr. George. "But you

have not mentioned that party's name. Is it a secret, sir?"

"The boy makes it one. But the name is Bucket."

"Bucket the Detective, sir?"

"The same man."

"The man is known to me, sir," returns the trooper, after blowing out a cloud of smoke and squaring his chest; "and the boy is so far correct that he undoubtedly is a—rum customer." Mr. George smokes with a profound meaning after this, and surveys Miss Flite in silence.

"Now, I wish Mr. Jarndyce and Miss Summerson at least to know that this Jo, who tells so strange a story, has reappeared; and to have it in their power to speak with him, if they should desire to do so. Therefore I want to get him for the present moment into any poor lodging kept by decent people, where he would be admitted. Decent people and Jo, Mr. George," says Allan, following the direction of the trooper's eyes along the entry, "have not been much acquainted, as you see. Hence the difficulty. Do you happen to know any one in this neighborhood, who would receive him for awhile, on my paying for him beforehand?"

As he puts the question, he becomes aware of a dirty-faced little man, standing at the trooper's elbow, and looking up, with an oddly twisted figure and countenance, into the trooper's face. After a few

more puffs at his pipe, the trooper looks down askant at the little man, and the little man winks up at the trooper.

"Well, sir," says Mr. George, "I can assure you that I would willingly be knocked on the head at any time, if it would be at all agreeable to Miss Sommerson; and consequently I esteem it a privilege to do that young lady any service, however small. We are naturally in the vagabond way here, sir, both myself and Phil. You see what the place is. You are welcome to a quiet corner of it for the boy, if the same would meet your views. No charge made except for rations. We are not in a flourishing state of circumstances here, sir. We are liable to be tumbled out neck and crop, at a moment's notice. However, sir, such as the place is, and so long as it lasts, here it is at your service."

With a comprehensive wave of his pipe, Mr. George places the whole building at the visitor's disposal.

"I take it for granted, sir," he adds, "you being one of the medical staff, that there is no present infection about this unfortunate subject?"

Allan is quite sure of it."

"Because, sir," said Mr. George, shaking his head sorrowfully, "we have had enough of that."

His tone is no less sorrowfully echoed by his new acquaintance. "Still, I am bound to tell you," ob-

serves Allan, after repeating his former assurance, "that the boy is deplorably low and reduced; and that he may be—I do not say that he is—too far gone to recover."

"Do you consider him in present danger, sir?" inquires the trooper.

"Yes, I fear so."

"Then, sir," returns the trooper, in a decisive manner, "it appears to me—being naturally in the vagabond way myself—that the sooner he comes out of the street the better. You Phil! Bring him in!"

Mr. Squod tacks out, all on one side, to execute the word of command; and the trooper, having smoked his pipe, lays it by. Jo is brought in. Dirty, ugly, disagreeable to all the senses, in body a common creature of the common streets, only in soul a heathen. Homely filth begrimes him, homely parasites devour him, homely sores are in him, homely rags are on him; native ignorance, the growth of English soil and climate, sinks his immortal nature lower than the beasts that perish. Stand forth, Jo, in uncompromising colors! From the sole of thy foot to the crown of thy head, there is nothing interesting about thee.

He shuffles slowly into Mr. George's gallery, and stands huddled together in a bundle, looking all about the floor. He seems to know that they have an inclination to shrink from him, partly for what he

is, and partly for what he has caused. He, too, shrinks from them. He is not of the same order of things, not of the same place of creation. He is of no order and no place; neither of the beasts, nor of humanity.

"Look here, Jo!" says Allan. "This is Mr. George."

Jo searches the floor for some time longer, then looks up for a moment, and then down again.

"He is a kind friend to you, for he is going to give you lodging-room here."

Jo makes a scoop with one hand, which is supposed to be a bow. After a little more consideration, and some backing and changing of the foot on which he rests, he mutters that he is "wery thankful."

"You are quite safe here. All you have to do at present is to be obedient and to get strong. And mind you tell us the truth here, whatever you do, Jo."

"Wishermaydie if I don't sir," says Jo, reverting to his favorite declaration. "I never done nothink yit but wot you knows on, to get myself into no trouble. I never was in no other trouble at all, sir —'sept not knowin' nothink and starwation."

"I believe it. Now attend to Mr. George. I see he is going to speak to you."

"My intention merely was, sir," observes Mr. George, amazingly broad and upright, "to point out

to him where he can lie down, and get a thorough good dose of sleep. Now, look here." As the trooper speaks, he conducts them to the other end of the gallery, and opens one of the little cabins. "There you are, you see! Here is a mattress, and here you may rest, on good behavior, as long as Mr.—— I ask your pardon, sir," he refers apologetically to the card Allan had given him; "Mr. Woodcourt pleases. Don't you be alarmed if you hear shots; they'll be aimed at the target, and not you. Now there's another thing I would recommend, sir," says the trooper, turning to his visitor. "Phil, come here!"

Phil bears down upon them, according to his usual tactics.

"Here is a man, sir, who was found, when a baby, in the gutter. Consequently, it is to be expected that he takes a natural interest in this poor creature. You do, don't you, Phil?"

"Certainly and surely I do, Guv'ner," is Phil's reply.

"Now I was thinking sir," says Mr. George, in a martial sort of confidence, as if he were giving his opinion in a council of war at a drum-head, "that if this man was to take him to a bath, and was to lay out a few shillings in getting him one or two coarse articles——"

"Mr. George, my considerate friend," returns Al-

lan, taking out his purse, "it is the very favor I would have asked."

Phil Squod and Jo are sent out immediately on this work of improvement. Miss Flite, quite enraptured by her success, makes the best of her way to Court.

Allan takes the opportunity of going out to procure some restorative medicines; and obtaining them near at hand, soon returns, to find the trooper walking up and down the gallery, and to fall into step and walk with him.

. . . . . .

Jo and his conductor presently return, and Jo is assisted to his mattress by the careful Phil; to whom, after due administration of medicine by his own hands, Allan confides all needful means and instructions. The morning is by this time getting on apace, he repairs to his lodgings to dress and breakfast; and then, without seeking rest, goes away to Mr. Jarndyce to communicate his discovery.

With him Mr. Jarndyce returns alone, confidentially telling him that there are reasons for keeping this matter very quiet indeed; and showing a serious interest in it. To Mr. Jarndyce Jo repeats in substance what he said in the morning; without any material variation. Only that cart of his is heavier to draw, and draws with a hollower sound.

"Let me lay here quiet, and not be chivied no

more," falters Jo; "and be so kind any person as is a-passin' nigh where I used fur to sweep, as jist to say to Mr. Snagsby that Jo, wot he known once, is a-moving on for'ards with his duty, and I'll be wery thankful. I'd be more thankful than I am a'ready, if it wos any ways possible for an unfortnet to be it."

He makes so many of these references to the law-stationer in the course of a day or two, that Allan, after conferring with Mr. Jarndyce, good-naturedly resolves to call in Cook's Court; the rather, as the cart seems to be breaking down.

To Cook's Court, therefore, he repairs. . . . .

Jo is very glad to see his old friend; and says, when they are left alone, that he takes it uncommon kind as Mr. Snagsby should come so far out of his way on accounts of sich as him. Mr. Snagsby, touched by the spectacle before him, immediately lays upon the table half a crown; that magic balsam of his for all kinds of wounds.

"And how do you find yourself, my poor lad?" inquires the stationer, with his cough of sympathy.

"I am in luck, Mr. Snagsby, I am," returns Jo, "and don't want for nothink. I'm more comf'bler nor you can't think, Mr. Snagsby! I'm wery sorry that I done it, but I didn't go fur to do it, sir."

The stationer softly lays down another half-crown, and asks him what it is that he is sorry for having done?

"Mr. Snagsby," says Jo, "I went and giv a illness to the lady, and none of 'em ever says nothink to me for having done it, on accounts of their being ser good and my having been s' unfortnet. The lady come herself and see me yesday, and she ses, 'Ah, Jo!' she ses. 'We thought we'd lost you, Jo!' she ses. And she sits down a-smilin' so quiet, and don't pass a word nor yit a look upon me for having done it, she don't, and I turns agin the wall, I doos, Mr. Snagsby. And Mr. Jarnders, I see him a-forced to turn away his own self. And Mr. Woodcot, he come fur to giv me somethink fur to ease me, wot he's allus a-doin' on day and night, and wen he come a bendin' over me and a-speakin' up so bold, I see his tears a-fallin', Mr. Snagsby."

The softened stationer deposits another half-crown on the table. Nothing less than a repetition of that infallible remedy will relieve his feelings.

"Wot I wos a-thinkin' on, Mr. Snagsby," proceeds Jo, "was as you wos able to write very large, p'raps?"

"Yes, Jo, please God," returns the stationer.

"Uncommon precious large, p'raps?" says Jo, with eagerness.

"Yes, my poor boy."

Jo laughs with pleasure. "Wot I wos a-thinkin' on then, Mr. Snagsby, was, that when I was moved on as fur as ever I could go and couldn't be moved no furder, whether you might be so good p'raps, as

to write out, wery large so that any one could see it anywheres, as that I wos wery truly hearty sorry that I done it and that I never went fur to do it; and that though I didn't know nothink at all, and I knowd as Mr. Woodcot once cried over it, and wos allus grieved over it, and that I hoped as he'd be able to forgive me in his mind. If the writin' could be made to say it wery large, he might."

"I shall say it, Jo. Very large."

Jo laughs again. "Thankee, Mr. Snagsby. It's wery kind of you, sir, and it makes me more cumfbler nor I wos afore."

The meek little stationer, with a broken and unfinished cough, slips down his fourth half-crown—he has never been so close to a case requiring so many—and is so fain to depart. And Jo and he, upon this little earth, shall meet no more. No more.

For the cart so hard to draw, is near its journey's end, and drags over stony ground. All round the clock, it labors up the broken steeps, shattered and worn. Not many times can the sun rise, and behold it still upon its weary road.

Phil Squod, with his smoky gunpowder visage, at once acts as nurse and works as armorer at his little table in a corner; often looking round, and saying, with a nod of his green baize cap, and an encouraging elevation of his one eyebrow, "Hold up, my boy! Hold up!" There, too, is Mr. Jarndyce many a time,

and Allan Woodcourt almost always; both thinking, much, how strangely Fate has entangled this rough outcast in the web of very different lives. There, too, the trooper is a frequent visitor; filling the doorway with his athletic figure, and from his superfluity of life and strength, seeming to shed down temporary vigor upon Jo, who never fails to speak more robustly in answer to his cheerful words.

Jo is in a sleep or in a stupor to-day, and Allan Woodcourt, newly arrived, stands by him, looking down upon his wasted form. After awhile, he softly seats himself upon the bedside with his face toward him—just as he sat in the law-writer's room—and touches his chest and heart. The cart had very nearly given up, but labors on a little more,

The trooper stands in the doorway, still and silent. Phil has stopped in a low, clinking noise, with his little hammer in his hand. Woodcourt looks round with that grave professional interest and attention on his face, and, glancing significantly at the trooper, signs to Phil to carry his table out. When the little hammer is next used, there will be a speck of rust upon it.

"Well, Jo! What is the matter? Don't be frightened."

"I thought," says Jo, who has started, and is looking, "I thought I wos in Tom-all-alone's agin. Ain't there nobody here but you, Mr. Woodcot?"

"Nobody."

"And I ain't took back to Tom-all-alone's. Am I, sir?"

"No." Jo closes his eyes, muttering, "I'm wery thankful."

After watching closely a little while, Allan puts his mouth very near his ear, and says to him in a low, distinct voice:

"Jo! Did you ever know a prayer?"

"Never knowd nothink, sir."

"Not so much as one short prayer?"

"No, sir. Nothink at all. Mr. Chadbands he wos a-prayin' wunst at Mr. Snagsby's and I heerd him, but he sounded as if he wos a-speakin' to hisself, and not to me. He prayed a lot, but *I* couldn't make out nothink on it. Different times, there was other genlmen come down Tom-all-alone's a-prayin', but they all mostly sed as the t'other wuns prayed wrong, and all mostly sounded to be a-talking' to theirselves, or a passin' blame on the t'others, and not a-talkin' to us. *We* never knowd nothink. *I* never knowd what it wos all about."

It takes him a long time to say this; and few but an experienced and attentive listener could hear and, hearing, understand him. After a short relapse into sleep or stupor, he makes, of a sudden, a strong effort to get out of bed.

"Stay, Jo! What now?"

"It's time for me to go to that there berryin'-ground, sir," he returns with a wild look.

"Lie down, and tell me. What berrying-ground, Jo?"

"Where they laid him as was werry good to me, werry good to me, indeed, he wos. It's time fur me to go down to that there berryin'-ground, sir, and ask to be put along with him. I wants to go there and be berried. He used fur to say to me, 'I am as poor as you to-day, Jo,' he ses. I wants to tell him that I am as poor as him now, and have come there to be laid along with him."

"By and by, Jo. By and by."

"Ah! P'raps they wouldn't do it if I wos to go myself. But will you promise to have me took there, sir, and laid along with him?"

"I will, indeed."

"Thankee, sir. Thankee, sir. They'll have to get the key of the gate afore they can take me in, for it's allus locked. And there's a step there, as I used fur to clean with my broom. It's turned wery dark, sir. Is there any light a-comin'?"

"It is coming fast, Jo."

Fast. The cart is shaken all to pieces, and the rugged road is very near its end.

"Jo, my poor fellow."

"I hear you, sir, in the dark, but I am a-gropin'—a-gropin'—let me catch hold of your hand."

"Joe, can you say what I say?"

"I'll say anythink as you say, sir, for I knows it's good."

"OUR FATHER."

"Our Father!—yes, that's wery good, sir."

"WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

"Art in Heaven—is the light a-comin, sir?"

"It is close at hand. HALLOWED BE THY NAME!"

"Hallowed be—thy——"

The light has come upon the dark benighted way. Dead!

Dead; your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day.

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

I GOT down to Yarmouth in the evening, and went to the inn. I knew that Peggotty's spare room —my room—was likely to have occupation enough in a little while if the great Visitor, before whose presence all the living must give place, were not already in the house; so I betook myself to the inn, and dined there, and engaged my bed.

It was ten when I went out, I determined to go to the house at once, and directed my steps thither, with a solemn feeling, which made Mr. Barkis quite a new and different creature.

My low tap on the door was answered by Mr. Peggotty. He was not so much surprised to see me as I had expected. I remarked this in Peggotty, too, when she came down; and I have seen it since; and I think, in the expectation of that dread surprise, all other changes and surprises dwindle into nothing.

I shook hands with Mr. Peggotty, and passed into the kitchen, while he softly closed the door. Little Em'ly was sitting by the fire, with her hands before her face. Ham was standing near her.

We spoke in whispers; listening, between whiles, for any sound in the room above. I had not thought of it on the occasion of my last visit, but how strange it was to me now, to miss Mr. Barkis out of the kitchen!

"This is very kind of you, Mas'r Davy," said Mr. Peggotty.

"It's oncommon kind," said Ham.

"Em'ly, my dear," cried Mr. Peggotty. "See here! Here's Mas'r Davy come. What, cheer up, pretty! Not a wured to Mas'r Davy?"

There was a trembling upon her, that I can see now. The coldness of her hand when I touched it, I can feel yet. Its only sign of animation was to shrink from mine; and then she glided from the chair, and, creeping to the other side of her uncle, bowed herself silently and trembling still, upon his breast.

"It's such a loving art," said Mr. Peggotty, smoothing her rich hair with his great hard hand, "that it can't bear the sorrer of this. It's nat'ral in young folk, Mas'r Davy, when they're new to these here trials, and timid, like my little bird—it's nat'ral."

She clung closer to him, but neither lifted up her face, nor spoke a word.

"It's getting late, my dear," said Mr. Peggotty, "and here's Ham come fur to take you home.

Theer! Go along with t'other loving art! What, Em'ly? Eh, my pretty?"

The sound of her voice had not reached me, but he bent his head as if he listened to her and said:

"Let you stay with your uncle? Why, you don't mean to ask me that! Stay with your uncle, Moppet? When your husband that'll be so soon, is here fur to take you home? Now a person wouldn't think it, fur to see this little thing alongside a rough-weather chap like me," said Mr. Peggotty, looking round at both of us, with infinite pride; "but the sea ain't more salt in it than she has fondness in her for her uncle—a foolish little Em'ly!"

"Em'ly's in the right in that, Mas'r Davy!" said Ham. "Lookee here! As Em'ly wishes it, and as she's hurried and frightened, like, besides, I'll leave her till morning. Let me stay too!"

"No, no," said Mr. Peggotty. "You doen't ought —a married man like you, or what's as good—to take and hull away a day's work. And you doen't ought to watch and work both. That won't do. You go home and turn in. You ain't afeerd of Em'ly, not being took good care on, *I* know."

Ham yielded to this persuasion, and took his hat to go. Even when he kissed her—and I never saw him approach her but I felt that nature had given him the soul of a gentleman—she seemed to cling closer to her uncle, even to the avoidance of her

chosen husband. I shut the door after him, that it might cause no disturbance of the quiet that prevailed; and when I turned back I found Mr. Peggotty still talking to her.

"Now, I'm agoing up-stairs to tell your aunt as Mas'r Davy's here, and that'll cheer her up a bit," he said. "Sit ye down by the fire the while, my dear, and warm these mortal cold hands. You doen't need to be so fearsome, and take on so much. What? You'll go along with me? Well! come along with me—come! If her uncle was turned out of a house and home, and forced to lay down in a dyke, Mas'r Davy," said Mr. Peggotty, with no less pride than before, "it's my belief she'd go along with him, now! But there'll be some one else soon—some one else soon, Em'ly!"

Afterward, when I went up-stairs, as I passed the door of my little chamber, which was dark, I had an indistinct impression of her being within it, cast down upon the floor. But, whether it was really she, or whether it was a confusion of the shadows in the room, I don't know now.

I had leisure to think, before the kitchen fire, of pretty little Em'ly's dread of death—which, added to what Mr. Omer had told me, I took to be the cause of her being so unlike herself—and I had leisure, before Peggotty came down, even to think more leniently of the weakness of it: as I sat counting the

ticking of the clock, and deepening my sense of the solemn hush around me, Peggotty took me in her arms, and blessed and thanked me over and over again for being such a comfort to her (that was what she said) in her distress. She then entreated me to come up-stairs, sobbing that Mr. Barkis had always liked me and admired me; that he had often talked of me, before he fell into a stupor; and that she believed, in case of his coming to himself again, he would brighten up at sight of me, if he could brighten up at any earthly thing.

The probability of his ever doing so appeared to me, when I saw him, to be very small. He was lying with his head and shoulders out of bed, in an uncomfortable attitude, half resting on the box which had cost him so much pain and trouble. I learned that, when he was past creeping out of bed to open it, and past assuring himself of its safety by means of the divining rod I had seen him use, he had required to have it placed on the chair at the bed-side, where he had ever since embraced it, night and day. His arm lay on it now. Time and the world were slipping from beneath him, but the box was there; and the last words he had uttered were (in an explanatory tone) "Old clothes!"

"Barkis, my dear!" said Peggotty, almost cheerfully, bending over him, while her brother and I stood at the bed's foot. "Here's my dear boy—my

dear boy, Master Davy, who brought us together, Barkis! That you sent messages by, you know! Won't you speak to Master Davy?"

He was as mute and senseless as the box from which his form derived the only expression it had.

"He's a going out with the tide," said Mr. Peggotty to me, behind his hand.

My eyes were dim and so were Mr. Peggotty's; but I repeated in a whisper, "With the tide?"

"People can't die, along the coast," said Mr. Peggotty, "except when the tide's pretty nigh out. They can't be born, unless it's pretty nigh in—not properly born till flood. He's agoing out with the tide. It's ebb at half-arter three, slack water half-an-hour. If he lives till it turns, he'll hold his own till past the flood, and go out with the next tide."

We remained there, watching him, a long time—hours. What mysterious influence my presence had upon him in that state of his senses, I shall not pretend to say; but when he at last began to wander feebly, it is certain he was muttering about driving me to school.

"He's coming to himself," said Peggotty.

Mr. Peggotty touched me, and whispered with much awe and reverence, "They are both a going out fast."

"Barkis, my dear!" said Peggotty.

"C. P. Barkis," he cried faintly. "No better woman anywhere."

"Look! Here's Master Davy!" said Peggotty. For he now opened his eyes.

I was on the point of asking him if he knew me, when he tried to stretch out his arm, and said to me, distinctly, with a pleasant smile: "Barkis is willin'!"

And, it being low water, he went out with the tide.

. . . . . .

It was not difficult for me, on Peggotty's solicitation, to resolve to stay where I was, until after the remains of the poor carrier should have made their last journey to Blunderstone. She had long ago bought, out of her own savings, a little piece of ground in our old churchyard, near the grave "of her sweet girl," as she always called my mother: and there they were to rest.

In keeping Peggotty company, and doing all I could for her (little enough at the utmost), I was as grateful, I rejoice to think, as even now I could wish myself to have been. But I am afraid I had a supreme satisfaction, of a personal and professional nature, in taking charge of Mr. Barkis's will, and expounding its contents.

I may claim the merit of having originated the suggestion that the will should be looked for in the box. After some search, it was found in the box, at

the bottom of a horse's nose-bag; wherein (besides hay) there was discovered an old gold watch, with chain and seals, which Mr. Barkis had worn on his wedding day, and which had never been seen before or since; a silver tobacco stopper, in the form of a leg; an imitation lemon, full of minute cups and saucers, which I have some idea Mr. Barkis must have purchased to present to me when I was a child, and afterward found himself unable to part with; eighty-seven guineas and a half, in guineas and half guineas; two hundred and ten pounds, in perfectly clean bank notes; certain receipts for Bank of England stock; an old horse-shoe, a bad shilling, a piece of camphor, and an oyster shell. From the circumstance of the latter article having been much polished, and displaying prismatic colors on the inside, I conclude that Mr. Barkis had some general ideas about pearls, which never resolved themselves into anything definite.

For years and years Mr. Barkis had carried this box, on all his journeys, every day. That it might the better escape notice, he had invented a fiction that it belonged to "Mr. Blackboy," and was "to be left with Barkis till called for;" a fable he had elaborately written on the lid, in characters now scarcely legible.

He had hoarded, all these years, I found, to good purpose. His property in money amounted to nearly

three thousand pounds. Of this he bequeathed the interest of one thousand to Mr. Peggotty for his life; on his decease, the principle to be equally divided between Peggotty, little Em'ly, and me, or the survivor or survivors of us, share and share alike. All the rest he died possessed of he bequeathed to Peggotty, whom he left residuary legatee, and sole executrix of that, his last will and testament.

I felt myself quite a proctor when I read this document aloud with all possible ceremony, and set forth its provisions, any number of times, to those whom they concerned. I began to think there was more in the Commons than I had supposed. I examined the will with the deepest attention, pronounced it perfectly formal in all respects, made a pencil mark or so in the margin, and thought it rather extraordinary that I knew so much.

In this abstruse pursuit; in making an account for Peggotty of all the property into which she had come; in arranging all the affairs in orderly manner, and in being her referee and adviser on every point, to our joint delight; I passed the week before the funeral. I did not see little Em'ly in that interval but they told me she was to be quietly married in a fortnight.

I did not attend the funeral in character, if I may venture to say so. I mean I was not dressed up in a black cloak and a streamer, to frighten the birds; but

I walked over to Blunderstone early in the morning, and was in the churchyard when it came, attended only by Peggotty and her brother. The mad gentleman looked on, out of my little window; Mr. Chillip's baby wagged its heavy head and rolled its goggle eyes at the clergyman, over its nurse's shoulder; Mr. Omer breathed short in the background; no one else was there, and it was very quiet. We walked about the churchyard for an hour after all was over, and pulled some young leaves from the tree above my mother's grave.

A dread falls on me here. A cloud is lowering on the distant town, toward which I retraced my solitary steps. I fear to approach it. I cannot bear to think of what did come upon that memorable night; of what must come again, if I go on.

It is no worse because I write of it. It would be no better if I stopped my most unwilling hand. It is done. Nothing can undo it; nothing can make it otherwise than as it was.

My old nurse was to go to London with me next day, on the business of the will. Little Em'ly was passing that day at Mr. Omer's. We were all to meet in the old boathouse that night. Ham would bring Em'ly at the usual hour. I would walk back at my leisure. The brother and sister would return as they had come, and be expecting us, when the day closed in, at the fireside.

I parted from them at the wicket-gate, where visionary Straps had rested with Roderick Random's knapsack in the days of yore, and instead of going straight back, walked a little distance on the road to Lowestoft. Then I turned, and walked back toward Yarmouth. I stayed to dine at a decent alehouse, some mile or two from the Ferry I have mentioned before; and thus the day wore away, and it was evening when I reached it. Rain was falling heavily by that time, and it was a wild night; but there was a moon behind the clouds, and it was not dark.

I was soon within sight of Mr. Peggotty's house, and of the light within it shining through the window. A little floundering across the sand, which was heavy, brought me to the door, and I went in.

It looked very comfortable, indeed. Mr. Peggotty had smoked his evening pipe, and there were preparations for some supper by-and by. The fire was bright, the ashes were thrown up, the locker was ready for little Em'ly in her old place. In her own old place, sat Peggotty, once more, looking (but for her dress) as if she had never left it. She had fallen back, already, on the society of the work-box with St. Paul's upon the lid, the yard-measure in the cottage, and the bit of wax-candle; and there they all were, just as if they had never been disturbed. Mrs. Gummidge appeared to be fretting a little, in

her old corner ; and, consequently, looked quite natural, too.

"You're first of the lot, Mas'r Davy?" said Mr. Peggotty, with a happy face. "Don't keep in that coat, sir, if it's wet."

"Thank you, Mr. Peggotty," said I, giving him my coat to hang up. "It's quite dry."

"So, 'tis," said Mr. Peggotty, feeling my shoulders. "As a chip. Sit ye down, sir. It ain't o' no use saying welcome to you, but you're welcome, kind and hearty."

"Thank you, Mr. Peggotty, I am sure of that. Well, Peggotty!" said I, giving her a kiss, "And how are you, old woman?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Peggotty, sitting down beside us, and rubbing his hands in his sense of relief from recent trouble, and in the genuine heartiness of his nature; "there's not a woman in the wureld, sir—as I tell her—that need to feel more easy in her mind than her! She done her dooty by the departed, and the departed know'd it, and the departed done what was right by her, as she done what was right by the departed--and--and--and it's all right."

Mrs. Gummidge groaned.

"Cheer up, my pretty mawther!" said Mr. Peggotty. (But he shook his head aside at us, evidently sensible of the tendency of the late occurrences to recall the memory of the old one.) "Doen't be

down ! Cheer up, for your own self, on'y a little bit, and see if a good deal more doen't come nat'ral ! "

"Not to me, Dan'l," returned Mrs. Gummidge, "Nothinks natural to me to be lone and lorn."

"No, no," said Mr. Peggotty, soothing her sorrows.

"Yes, yes, Dan'l!" said Mrs. Gummidge, "I ain t a person to live with them as has had money left. Thinks go too contrairy with me. I had better be a riddance."

"Why, how should I ever spend it without you ?" said Mr. Peggotty, with an air of serious remonstrance. "What are you a talking of? Doen't I want you more now than ever I did ?"

"I know'd I was never wanted before !" cried Mrs. Gummidge, with a pitiable whimper, "and now I'm told so ! How could I expect to be wanted, being so lone and lorn, and so contrairy ?"

Mr. Peggotty seemed very much shocked at himself for having made a speech capable of this unfeeling construction, but was prevented from replying by Mrs. Peggotty's pulling his sleeve, and shaking her head. After looking at Mrs. Gummidge for some moments, in sore distress of mind, he glanced at the Dutch clock, rose, snuffed the candle, and put it in the window.

"Theer !" said Mr. Peggotty, cheerily. "Theer we are, Missis Gummidge !" Mrs. Gummidge slightly groaned. "Lighted up, accordin' to custom!

You're a wonderin' what that's fur, sir! Well, it's fur our little Em'ly. You see, the path ain't over light or cheerful arter dark: and when I'm here at the hour as she's a comin' home, I puts the light in the winder. That you see," said Mr. Peggotty, bending over me with great glee, "meets two objects. She says, says Em'ly, 'Theer's home!' she says. And likewise, says Em'ly, 'My uncle's theer!' Fur if I ain't theer, I never have no light showed."

"You're a baby!" said Peggotty; very fond of him for it, if she thought so.

"Well," returned Mr. Peggotty, standing with his legs pretty wide apart, and rubbing his hands up and down them in his comfortable satisfaction, as he looked alternately at us and at the fire, "I don't know but I am. Not, you see, to look at."

"Not azactly," observed Peggotty.

"No!" laughed Mr. Peggotty, "not to look at, but to—consider on, you know. *I* doen't care, bless you. Now I tell you. When I go a looking and looking about that theer pritty house of our Em'ly's, I'm —I'm Gormed," said Mr. Peggotty, with sudden emphasis—"theer! I can't say more—if I doen't feel as if the littlest things was her, a'most. I takes 'em up and I puts 'em down, and I touches of 'em, as delicate as if they were our Em'ly. So 'tis with her little bonnets and that, I couldn't see one of 'em rough used a purpose—not for the whole wureld.

Dickens.

MR. PEGGOTTY

There's a babby for you, in the form of a great Sea Porkypine?" said Mr. Peggotty, relieving his earnestness with a roar of laughter.

Peggotty and I both laughed, but not so loud.

"It's my opinion, you see," said Mr. Peggotty, with a delighted face, after some further rubbing of his legs, "as this is along of my havin' played with her so much, and made believe as we was Turks, and French, and sharks, and every variety of forinners—bless you, yes; and lions and whales, and I doen't know what all!—when she warn't no higher than my knee. I've got into the way, on it, you know. Why, this here candle now!" said Mr. Peggotty, gleefully holding his hand out toward it, "*I* know wery well that arter she's married and gone, I shall put that candle theer just that same as now. I know wery well that when I'm here o' nights (and where else should *I* live, bless your arts, whatever fortun I come into!) and she ain't here, or I ain't theer, I shall put the candle in the winder, and sit afore the fire, pretending I'm expecting of her, like I'm a doing now. *There's* a babby for you," said Mr. Peggotty, with another roar, "in the form of a Sea Porkypine! Why, at the present minute, when I see the candle sparkle up I says to myself, 'She's a looking at it! Em'ly's a coming!' *There's* a babby for you, in the form of a Sea Porkypine! Right for all that," said Mr. Peggotty, stopping in his

roar, and smiting his hands together, "fur here she is!"

It was only Ham. The night should have turned more wet since I came in, for he had a large sou'-wester hat on, slouched over his face.

"Where's Em'ly?" said Mr. Peggotty.

Ham made a motion with his head as if she were outside. Mr. Peggotty took the light from the window, trimmed it, put it on the table, and was busily stirring the fire, when Ham who had not moved, said:

"Mas'r Davy, will you come out a minute and see what Em'ly and me has got to show you?"

We went out. As I passed him at the door I saw to my utter astonishment and fright that he was deadly pale. He pushed me hastily into the open air and closed the door upon us. Only upon us two.

"Ham! what's the matter?"

"Mas'r Davy!—" Oh, for his broken heart, how dreadfully he wept!

I was paralyzed by the sight of such grief. I didn't know what I thought, or what I dreaded. I could only look at him.

"Ham! Poor, good fellow! For Heaven's sake tell me what's the matter?"

"My love, Mas'r Davy—the pride and hope of my 'art—her that I'd have died for, and would die for now—she's gone!"

"Gone!"

"Em'ly has run away! Oh, Mas'r Davy, think *how* she's run away, when I pray my good and gracious God to kill her (her that is so dear above all things) sooner than let her come to ruin and disgrace!"

The face he turned up to the troubled sky, the quivering of his clasped hands, the agony of his figure, remain associated with that lonely waste, in my remembrance, to this hour. It is always night there, and he is the only object in the scene.

"You're a scholar," he said, hurriedly, "and know what's right and best. What am I to say indoors? How am I ever to break it to him, Mas'r Davy?"

I saw the door move, and instinctively tried to hold the latch on the outside, to gain a moment's time. It was too late. Mr. Peggotty thrust forth his face; and never could I forget the change that came upon it when he saw us, if I were to live five hundred years.

I remember a great wail and cry, and the women hanging about him, and we all standing in the room; I with a paper in my hand, which Ham had given me; Mr. Peggotty with his vest torn open, his hair wild, his face and lips white, and blood trickling down his bosom (it had sprung from his mouth, I think) looking fixedly at me.

"Read it, sir," he said, in a low, shivering voice. "Slow, please. I doen't know as I can understand."

In the midst of the silence of death I read thus, from a blotted letter:

"'When you, who love me so much better than I ever have deserved, even when my mind was innocent, see this, I shall be far away,'"

"I shall be fur away," he repeated, slowly. "Stop! Em'ly fur away. Well!"

"'When I leave my dear home—my dear home—oh, my dear home!—in the morning.'"

the letter bore date on the previous night:

"'—it will be never to come back unless he brings me back a lady. This will be found at night, many hours after, instead of me. Oh, if you knew how my heart is torn. If even you, that I have wronged so much, that never can forgive me, could only know what I suffer! I am too wicked to write about myself. Oh! take comfort in thinking that I am so bad. Oh, for mercy's sake, tell uncle that I never loved him half so dear as now. Oh, don't remember how affectionate and kind you have all been to me—don't remember we were ever to be married—but try to think as if I died when I was little, and was buried somewhere. Pray Heaven that I am going away from, have compassion on my uncle! Tell him that I never loved him half so dear. Be his comfort. Love some good girl, that will be what I was once to uncle, and be true to you, and worthy of you, and know no shame but me. God bless all! I'll pray for all, often on my knees. If he don't bring me back a lady, and I don't pray for my

own self, I'll pray for all. My parting love to uncle. My last tears, and my last thanks, for uncle!"

That was all.

He stood, long after I had ceased to read, still looking at me. At length I ventured to take his hand, and to entreat him, as well as I could, to endeavor to get some command of himself. He replied, "I thankee, sir, I thankee!" without moving.

Ham spoke to him. Mr. Peggotty was so far sensible of *his* afflictions that he wrung his hands; but, otherwise, he remained in the same state, and no one dared to disturb him.

Slowly at last he moved his eyes from my face, as if he were waking from a vision, and cast them round the room. Then he said, in a low voice:

"Who's the man? I want to know his name."

Ham glanced at me, and suddenly I felt a shock that struck me back.

"There's a man suspected," said Mr. Peggotty, "Who is that?"

"Mas'r Davy!" implored Ham. "Go out a bit and let me tell him what I must. You doen't ought to hear it, sir."

I felt the shock again. I sank down in a chair and tried to utter some reply, but my tongue was fettered and my sight was weak.

"I want to know his name!" I heard said once more.

"For some time past," Ham faltered, "there's

been a servant about here at odd times. There's been a gen'l'm'n too. Both of 'em belonging to one another."

Mr. Peggotty stood fixed as before, but now looking at him.

"The servant," pursued Ham, "was seen long with—our poor girl—last night. He's been in hiding about here this week or over. He was thought to have gone, but he was hiding. Doen't stay, Mas'r Davy, doen't!"

I felt Peggotty's arm around my neck, but I could not have moved if the house had been about to fall on me.

"A strange shay and horses was outside town this morning, on the Norwich road, 'a most afore the day broke." Ham went on. "The servant went to it, and came from it, and went to it again. When he went to it again Em'ly was nigh him. The t'other was inside. He's the man."

"For the Lord's love," said Mr. Peggotty, falling back and putting out his hand, as if to keep off what he dreaded. "Doen't tell me his name is Steerforth!"

"Mas'r Davy," exclaimed Ham, in a broken voice, "it arn't no fault of yourn—and I am far from laying it to you, but his name is Steerforth,and he's a d–d villain!"

Mr. Peggotty uttered no cry, and shed no tear, and moved no more, until he seemed to wake again, all at once, and pulled down his rough coat from its peg in the corner.

"Bear a hand with this! I'm struck of a heap, and can't do it," he said, impatiently. "Bear a hand and help me! Well!" when somebody has done so. "Now give me that theer hat!"

Ham asked him whither he was going.

"I'm going to seek my niece. I'm going to seek my Em'ly. I'm a going first, to stave in that theer boat, and sink it where I would have drowned *him*, as I'm a livin' soul, if I had had one thought of what was in him! As he sat afore me," he said, wildly, holding out his clenched right hand, "as he sat afore me, face to face, strike me down dead, but I'd have drowned him and thought it right. I'm a going to seek my niece!"

"Where?" cried Ham, interposing himself before the door.

"Anywhere! I'm a going to seek my niece through the wureld. I'm a going to find my poor niece in her shame, and bring her back. No one stop me! I tell you I'm going to seek my niece!"

"No, no!" cried Mrs. Gummidge, coming between them in a fit of crying. "No, no, Dan'l, not as you are now. Seek her in a little while, my lone lorn Dan'l, and that'l be but right! but not as you are now. Sit ye down and give me your forgiveness for having ever been a worrit to you, Dan'l—what have *my* contraries ever been to this!—and let us speak a word about them times when she was first an or-

phan, and when Ham was too, and when I was a poor widder woman, and you took me in. It'll soften your poor heart Dan'l," laying her head upon his shoulder, "and you'll bear your sorrow better; for you know the promise, Dan'l, 'As you have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto me;' and that can never fail under this roof, that's been our shelter for so many, many years.

He was quite passive now; and when I heard him crying, the impulse that had been upon me to go down upon my knees, and ask their pardon for the desolation I had caused, and curse Steerforth, yielded to a better feeling. My overcharged heart found the same relief, and I cried too. . . . . .

What is natural in me, is natural in many other men, I infer, so I am not afraid to write that I never had loved Steerforth better than when the ties that bound me to him were broken. In the keen distress of the discovery of his unworthiness, I thought more of all that was brilliant of him, I softened more toward all that was good in him, I did more justice to the qualities that might have made him a man of a noble nature and a great name, than ever I had done in the height of my devotion to him. Deeply as I felt my own unconscious part in the pollution of an honest home, I believe that if I had been brought face to face with him, I could not have uttered one reproach. I should have loved him so well still—

though he fascinated me no longer—I should have held in so much tenderness the memory of my affection for him, that I think I should have been as weak as a spirit-wounded child, in all but the entertainment of a thought that we could ever be re-united. That thought I never had. I felt, as he had felt, that all was at an end between us. What his remembrances of me were, I have never known—they were light enough, perhaps, and easily dismissed—but mine of him were as the remembrances of a cherished friend, who was dead.

Yes, Steerforth, long removed from the scenes of this poor history! My sorrow may bear involuntary witness against you at the Judgment Throne; but my angry thoughts or reproaches never will, I know!

. . . . . .

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I now approach an event in my life, so indelible, so awful, so bound by infinite variety of ties to all that has preceded it, in these pages, that from the beginning of my narrative, I have seen it growing larger and larger as I advanced, like a great tower in a plain. and throwing its forecast shadow even on the incidents of my childish days.

For years after it occurred, I dreamed of it often. I have started up so vividly impressed by it, that its fury has yet seemed raging in my quiet room, in the still night. I dream of it sometimes, though at

lengthened and uncertain intervals, to this hour. I have an association between it and a stormy wind, or the lightest mention of a seashore, as strong as any of which my mind is conscious. As plainly as I behold what happened, I will try to write it down. I do not recall it, but see it done; for it happens again before me.

The time drawing on rapidly for the sailing of the emigrant ship, my good old nurse came up to London. I was constantly with her, and her brother, and the Micawbers (they being very much together).

One evening when the time was close at hand, I was alone with Peggotty and her brother. Our conversation turned on Ham. She described to us how tenderly he had taken leave of her, and how manfully and quietly he had borne himself. Most of all, of late, when she believed he was most tried. It was a subject of which the affectionate creature never tired; and our interest in hearing the many examples, which she, who was so much with him, had to relate, was equal to hers in relating them.

My aunt and I were at that time vacating the two cottages at Highgate; I intending to go abroad, and she to return to her house at Dover. We had a temporary lodging in Convent Garden. As I walked home to it, after this evening's conversation, reflecting on what had passed between Ham and myself when I was last at Yarmouth, I wavered in

the original purpose I had formed, of leaving a letter for Em'ly when I should take leave of her uncle on board the ship, and thought it would be better to write to her now. She might desire, I thought, after receiving my communication, to send some parting word by me to her unhappy lover. I ought to give her the opportunity.

I therefore sat down in my room before going to bed and wrote to her. I told her that I had seen him, and that he had requested me to tell her what I have already written in its place in these sheets. I faithfully repeated it. I had no need to enlarge upon it if I had had the right. Its deep fidelity and goodness were not to be adorned by me or any man. I left it out, to be sent round in the morning, with a line to Mr. Peggotty, requesting him to give it to her, and went to bed at daybreak.

I was weaker than I knew then, and, not falling asleep until the sun was up, lay late, and unrefreshed, next day. I was roused by the silent presence of my aunt at my bedside. I felt it in my sleep, and I suppose we all do feel such things.

"Trot, my dear," she said, when I opened my eyes. "I couldn't make up my mind to disturb you. Mr. Peggotty is here; shall he come up?"

I replied yes, and he soon appeared.

"Mas'r Davy," he said, when we had shaken hands. "I giv' Em'ly your letter, sir, and she writ

this heer, and begged of me fur to ask you to read it, and if you see no hurt in't to be so kind as to take charge on't."

"Have you read it?" said I.

He nodded sorrowfully. I opened it and read as follows:

"I have got your message. O, what can I write to thank you for your good and blessed kindness to me?

"I have put the words close to my heart. I shall keep them till I die. They are sharp thorns, but they are such comfort. I have prayed over them, oh, I have prayed so much. When I find what you are, and what uncle is, I think what God must be, and can cry to him.

"Good-by for ever. Now, my dear, my friend, good-bye for ever in this world. In another world, if I am forgiven, I may wake a child and come to you. All thanks and blessings. Farewell, evermore."

This, blotted with tears, was the letter.

"May I tell her as you doen't see no hurt in't, and as you'll be so kind as to take charge on't, Mas'r Davy?" said Mr. Peggotty, when I had read it.

"Unquestionably," said I—"but I am thinking——"

"Yes, Mas'r Davy?"

"I am thinking," said I, "that I'll go down again to Yarmouth. There's time, and to spare, for me to go and come back before the ship sails. My mind

is constantly running on him, in his solitude; to put this letter of her writing in his hand at this time, and to enable you to tell her, in the moment of parting, that he has got it, will be a kindness to both of them. I solemnly accepted his commission, dear good fellow, and cannot discharge it too completely. The journey is nothing to me. I am restless, and shall be better in motion. I'll go down to-night."

Though he anxiously endeavored to dissuade me, I saw that he was of my mind; and this, if I had required to be confirmed in my attention, would have had the effect. He went round to the coach-office, at my request, and took the box-seat for me on the mail. In the evening I started, by that conveyance, down the road I had traversed under so many vicissitudes.

"Don't you think that," I asked the coachman, in the first stage out of London, "a very remarkable sky? I don't remember to have seen one like it."

"Nor I—not equal to it," he replied. "That's wind, sir. There'll be mischief done at sea, I expect before long."

It was a murky confusion—here and there blotted with a color like the color of the smoke from damp fuel—of flying clouds tossed up into most remarkable heaps, suggesting greater heights in the clouds than there was depths below them to the bottom of the deepest hollows in the earth, through which the wild

moon seemed to plunge headlong, as if, in a dread of disturbance of the laws of nature, she had lost her way and were frightened. There had been a wind all day: and it was rising then, with an extraordinary great sound. In another hour it had much increased, and the sky was more overcast, and blew hard.

But as the night advanced, the clouds closing in and densely overspreading the whole sky, then very dark, it came on to blow, harder and harder. It still increased, until our horses could scarcely face the wind. Many times, in the dark part of the night (it was then late in September, when the nights were not short), the leaders turned about, or came to a dead stop; and were often in serious apprehension that the coach would be blown over. Sweeping gusts of rain came up before this storm, like showers of steel; and, at those times, when there was any shelter of trees or lee walls to be got, we were fain to stop, in sheer impossibility of continuing the struggle.

When the day broke, it blew harder and harder. I had been in Yarmouth when the seamen said it blew great guns, but I had never known the like of this, or anything approaching to it. We came to Ipswich—very late, having had to fight every inch of ground since we were ten miles out of London; and found a cluster of people in the market-place, who had risen from their beds in the night, fearful of falling chimneys. Some of these, congregating about the inn-yard

while we changed horses, told us of great sheets of lead having been ripped off a church tower, and flung into a by-street, which they then blocked up. Others had to tell of country people, coming in from neighboring villages, who had seen great trees lying torn out of the earth, and whole bricks scattered about the roads and fields. Still there was no abatement in the storm, but it blew harder.

As we struggled on, nearer and nearer to the sea, from which this mighty wind was blowing dead on shore, its force became more and more terrific. Long before we saw the sea, its spray was on our lips, and showered salt rain upon us. The water was out, over miles and miles of the flat country adjacent to Yarmouth; and every sheet and puddle lashed its banks, and had its stress of little breakers setting heavily toward us. When we came within sight of the sea, the waves on the horizon, caught at intervals above the rolling abyss, were like glimpses of another shore with towers and buildings. When at last we got into the town, the people came out to their doors, all aslant, and with streaming hair, making a wonder of the mail that had come through such a night.

I put up at the old inn, and went down to look at the sea; staggering along the street, which was strewn with sand and seaweed and with flying blotches of sea foam; afraid of falling slates and tiles

and holding by people I met, at angry corners. Coming near the beach, I saw, not only the boatmen, but half the people of the town, lurking behind buildings; some, now and then braving the fury of the storm to look away to sea, and blown sheer out of their course in trying to get zigzag back.

Joining these groups, I found bewailing women whose husbands were away in herring or oyster boats, which there was too much reason to think might have foundered before they could run in anywhere for safety. Grizzled old sailors were among the people, shaking their heads, as they looked from water to sky, and muttering to one another; shipowners, excited and uneasy; children huddling together, and peering into older faces; even stout mariners, disturbed and anxious, leveling their glasses at the sea from behind places of shelter, as if they were surveying an enemy.

The tremendous sea itself, when I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, and the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came rolling in, and, at their highest, tumbled into surf, they looked as if the least would ingulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse roar, it seemed to scoop out a deep cave in the beach, as if its purpose were to undermine the earth. When some white-headed billows thundered

on, and dashed themselves to pieces before they reached the land, every fragament of the late whole seemed possessed by the full might of its wrath, rushing to be gathered to the composition of another monster. Undulating hills were changed to valleys, undulating valleys (with a solitary storm-bird sometimes skimming through them) were lifted up to hills; masses of water shivered and shook the beach with a booming sound; every shape tumultuously rolled on, as soon as made, to change its shape and place, and beat another shape and place away; the ideal shore on the horizon, with its towers and buildings, rose and fell; the clouds flew fast and quick; I seemed to see a rending and upheaving of all nature.

Not finding Ham among the people whom this memorable wind—for it is still remembered down there, as the greatest ever known to blow upon that coast—had brought together, I made my way to his house. It was shut; and as no one answered to my knocking, I went, by backways and by-lanes, to the yard where he worked. I learned there that he had gone to Lowestoft, to meet some sudden exigency of ship-repairing in which his skill was required; but that he would be back to-morrow morning, in good time.

I went back to the inn; and when I had washed and dressed, and tried to sleep, but in vain, it was

five o'clock in the afternoon. I had not sat five minutes by the coffee room fire, when the waiter coming to stir it, as an excuse for talking, told me that two colliers had gone down, with all hands, a few miles away; and that some other ships had been seen laboring hard in the Roads, and trying, in great distress, to keep off shore. Mercy on them, and on all poor sailors, said he, if we had another night like the last!

I was very much depressed in spirits; very solitary; and felt an uneasiness in Ham's not being there, disproportionate to the occasion. I was seriously affected, without knowing how much, by late events; and my long exposure to the fierce wind had confused me. There was that jumble in my thoughts and recollections, that I had lost the clear arrangement of time and distance. Thus, if I had gone out into the town, I should not have been surprised, I think, to encounter some one who I knew must then be in London. So to speak, there was in these respects a curious inattention in my mind. Yet it was busy, too, with all the remembrances the place naturally awakened; and they were particularly distinct and vivid.

In this state, the waiter's dismal intelligence about the ships immediately connected itself, without any effort of my volition, with my uneasiness about Ham. I was persuaded that I had an apprehension of his

returning from Lowestoft by sea, and being lost. This grew so strong with me, that I resolved to go back to the yard before I took my dinner, and ask the boat-builder if he thought his attempting to return by sea at all likely? If he gave me the least reason to think so, I would go over to Lowestoft and prevent it by bringing him with me.

I hastily ordered my dinner, and went back to the yard. I was none too soon; for the boat-builder, with a lantern in his hand, was locking the yard-gate. He quite laughed, when I asked him the question, and said there was no fear; no man in his senses, or out of them, would put off in such a gale of wind, least of all Ham Peggotty, who had been born to seafaring.

So sensible of this, beforehand, that I had really felt ashamed of doing what I was nevertheless impelled to do, I went back to the inn. If such a wind could rise, I think it was rising. The howl and roar, the rattling of the doors and windows, the rumbling in the chimneys, the apparent rocking of the very house that sheltered me, and the prodigious tumult of the sea, were more fearful than in the morning. But there was now a great darkness besides; and that invested the storm with new terrors, real and fanciful.

I could not eat, I could not sit still, I could not continue steadfast to anything. Something within

me, faintly answering in the storm without, tossed up the depths of my memory, and made a tumult within them. Yet in all the hurry of my thoughts, wild running with the thundering sea—the storm and my uneasiness regarding Ham were always in the foreground.

My dinner went away almost untasted, and I tried to refresh myself with a glass or two of wine. In vain. I fell into a dull slumber before the fire, without losing my consciousness, either of the uproar, out of doors, or of the place in which I was. Both became overshadowed by a new and indefinable horror; and when I awoke—or rather when I shook off the lethargy that bound me in my chair—my whole frame thrilled with objectless and unintelligible fear.

I walked to and fro; tried to read an old gazetteer; listened to the awful noises; looked at faces, scenes, and figures in the fire. At length, the steady ticking of the undisturbed clock on the wall tormented me to that degree that I resolved to go to bed.

It was re assuring, on such a night, to be told that some of the inn-servants had agreed together to sit up, until morning. I went to bed exceedingly weary and heavy; but, on my lying down, all such sensations vanished as if by magic, and I was broad awake, with every sense refined.

For hours I lay there, listening to the wind and water, imagining, now, that I heard shrieks out at

sea; now, that I distinctly heard the firing of signal guns; and now, the fall of houses in the town. I got up several times, and looked out; but could see nothing except the reflection in the window panes of the faint candle I had left burning, and of my own haggard face looking in at me from the black void.

At length my restlessness attained to such a pitch, that I hurried on my clothes, and went down-stairs. In a large kitchen, where I dimly saw bacon and ropes of onions hanging from the beams, the watchers were clustered together, in various attitudes about a table, purposely moved away from the great chimney, and brought near the door. A pretty girl, who had her ears stopped with her apron, and her eyes upon the door, screamed when I appeared, supposing me to be a spirit; but the others had more presence of mind, and were glad of an addition to their company. One man, referring to the topic they had been discussing, asked me whether I thought the souls of the collier-crews who had gone down, were out in the storm.

I remained there, I dare say, two hours. Once I opened the yardgate, and looked into the empty street. The sand, the sea-weed, and the flakes of foam were driving by; and I was obliged to call for assistance before I could shut the gate again, and make it fast against the wind.

There was a dark gloom in my solitary chamber,

when I at length returned to it; but I was tired, now, and, getting into bed again, fell—off a tower and down a precipice—into the depths of sleep. I have an impression that for a long time, though I dreamed of being elsewhere and in a variety of scenes, it was always blowing in my dream. At length I lost that feeble hold upon reality, and was engaged with two dear friends, but who they were I don't know, at the siege of some town in a roar of cannonading.

The thunder of the cannon was so loud and incessant that I could not hear something I much desired to hear, until I made a great exertion and awoke. It was broad day—eight or nine o'clock; the storm raging, in lieu of the batteries; and some one knocking and calling at my door.

"What is the matter?" I cried.

"A wreck! Close by!"

I sprung out of bed, and asked, "What wreck?"

"A schooner, from Spain or Portugal, laden with fruit and wine. Make haste, sir, if you want to see her! It's thought, down on the beach, she'll go to pieces every moment."

The excited voice went clamoring along the staircase; and I wrapped myself in my clothes as quickly as I could, and ran into the street.

Numbers of people were there before me, all running in one direction, to the beach. I ran the same

way, outstripping a good many, and soon came facing the wild sea.

The wind might by this time have lulled a little, though not more sensibly than if the cannonading I had dreamed of had been diminished by the silencing of half a dozen guns out of hundreds. But the sea, having upon it the additional agitation of the whole night, was infinitely more terrific than when I had seen it last. Every appearance it had then presented bore the expression of being *swelled;* and the height to which the breakers rose, and, looking over one another, bore one another down, and rolled in, in interminable hosts, was most appalling.

In the difficulty of hearing anything but the wind and waves, and in the crowd, and the unspeakable confusion, and my first breathless efforts to stand against the weather, I was so confused that I looked out to sea for the wreck, and saw nothing but the foaming heads of the great waves. A half-dressed boatman, standing next to me, pointed with his bare arm (a tattooed arrow on it, pointing in the same direction) to the left. Then, O, great Heaven, I saw it, close in upon us!

One mast was broken short off, six or eight feet from the deck, and lay over the side, entangled in a maze of sail and rigging; and all that ruin, as the ship rolled and beat—which she did without a moment's pause, and with a violence quite inconceiv-

able—beat the side as if it would stave it in. Some efforts were even then being made to cut this portion of the wreck away; for as the ship, which was broadside on, turned toward us in her rolling, I plainly descried her people at work with axes, especially one active figure with long curling hair, conspicuous among the rest. But a great cry, which was audible even above the wind and water, rose from the shore at this moment; the sea, sweeping over the rolling wreck, made a clean breach, and carried men, spars, casks, planks, bulwarks, heaps of such toys, into the boiling surge.

The second mast was yet standing, with the rags of a rent sail and a wild confusion of broken cordage flapping to and fro. The ship had struck once, the same boatman hoarsely said in my ear, and then lifted in and struck again. I understood him to add that she was parting amidships, and I could readily suppose so, for the rolling and beating were too tremendous for any human work to suffer long. As he spoke there was another great cry of pity from the beach; four men arose with the wreck out of the deep, clinging to the rigging of the remaining mast; uppermost the active figure with the curling hair.

There was a bell on board, and as the ship rolled and dashed, like a desperate creature driven mad, now showing us the whole sweep of her deck, as she turned on her beams-ends toward the shore, now

nothing but her keel, as she sprung wildly over and turned toward the sea, the bell rang and its sound, the knell of those unhappy men, was borne toward us on the wind. Again we lost her, and again she rose. Two men were gone. The agony on shore increased. Men groaned and clasped their hands; women shrieked and turned away their faces. Some ran wildly up and down along the beach, crying for help where no help could be. I found myself one of these, frantically imploring a knot of sailors whom I knew not to let those two creatures perish before our eyes.

They were making out to me, in an agitated way —I don't know how, for the little I could hear I was scarcely composed enough to understand—that the life-boat had been bravely manned an hour ago, and could do nothing; and that, as no man would be so desperate as to attempt to wade off with a rope, and establish a communication with the shore, there was nothing left to try; when I noticed that some new sensation moved the people on the beach, and saw them part, and Ham coming breaking through them to the front.

I ran to him—as well as I know, to repeat my appeal for help. But distracted though I was, by a sight so new to me and terrible, the determination in his face, and his look out to sea—exactly the same look as I remembered in connection with the morn-

ing after Em'ly's flight—awoke me to a knowledge of his danger. I held him back with both arms; and implored the men with whom I had been speaking, not to listen to him, not to do murder, not to let him stir from off that sand.

Another cry arose on shore; and looking to the wreck, we saw the cruel sail, with blow on blow, beat off the lower of the two men, and fly up in triumph round the active figure left alone upon the mast.

Against such a sight, and against such determination as that of the calmly desperate man who was already accustomed to lead half the people present, I might as hopefully have entreated the wind. "Mas'r Davy," he said, cheerily grasping me by both hands, "if my time is come, 'tis come. If tain't, I'll bide it. Lord above bless you, and bless all! Mates, make me ready! I'm a going off."

I was swept away, but not unkindly, to some distance, where the people around me made me stay; urging, as I confusedly perceived, that he was bent on going, with help or without, and that I should endanger the precautions for his safety by troubling those with whom they rested. I don't know what I answered, or what they rejoined; but, I saw hurry on the beach, and men running with ropes from a capstan that was there, and penetrating into a circle of figures that hid him from me. Then I saw him standing alone in a seaman's frock and trousers; a

rope in his hand, or slung to his wrist; another round his body; and several of the best men holding, at a little distance, to the latter, which he laid out himself, slack upon the shore at his feet.

The wreck, even to my unpracticed eye, was breaking up. I saw that she was parting in the middle, and that the life of the solitary man upon the mast hung by a thread. Still he clung to it. He had a singular red cap on—not like a sailor's cap, but of a finer color; and as the few yielding planks between him and destruction rolled and bulged, and his anticipative death knell rung, he was seen by all of us to wave it. I saw him do it now, and thought I was going distracted, when his action brought an old remembrance to my mind of a once dear friend.

Ham watched the sea, standing alone, with the silence of suspended breath behind him, and the storm before, until there was a great retiring wave, when, with a backward glance at those who held the rope which was made fast round his body, he dashed in after it, and in a moment was buffeting with the water; rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the foam; then drawn again to land. They hauled in hastily.

He was hurt. I saw blood on his face, from where I stood; but he took no thought of that. He seemed hurriedly to give them some directions for leaving him more free—or so I judged from the motion of his arm—and was gone as before.

And now he made for the wreck, rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the rugged foam, borne inward toward the shore, borne on toward the ship, striving hard and valiantly. The distance was nothing, but the power of the sea and wind made the strife deadly. At length he neared the wreck. He was so near, that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it—when a high, green, vast hillside of water, moving on shoreward, from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it with a mighty bound, and the ship was gone!

Some eddying fragments I saw in the sea, as if a mere cask had been broken, in running to the spot where they were hauling in. Consternation was in every face. They drew him to my very feet—insensible—dead. He was carried to the nearest house; and no one preventing me now, I remained near him, busy while every means of restoration was tried; but he had been beaten to death by the great wave, and his generous heart was stilled forever.

As I sat beside the bed, when hope was abandoned and all was done, a fisherman, who had known me when Em'ly and I were children, and ever since, whispered my name at the door.

"Sir," said he, with tears starting to his weather-beaten face, which, with his trembling lips, was ashy pale, "will you come over yonder?"

The old remembrance that had been recalled to me, was in his look. I asked him, terror-stricken, leaning on the arm he held out to support me:

"Has a body come ashore?"

He said "Yes."

"Do I know it?" I asked then.

He answered nothing.

But he led me to the shore. And on the part of it where she and I had looked for shells, two children —on that part of it where some lighter fragments of the old boat, blown down last night, had been scattered by the wind—among the ruins of the home he had wronged—I saw him lying with his head upon his arms, as I had often seen him lie at school.

. . . . . .

No need, O Steerforth, to have said, when we last spoke together, in that hour which I so little deemed to be our parting-hour—no need to have said, "Think of me at my best!" I had done that ever; and could I change now, looking on this sight.

They brought a hand-bier, and laid him on it, and covered him with a flag, and took him up and bore him on toward the houses. All the men who carried him had known him, and gone sailing with him, and seen him merry and bold. They carried him through the wild roar, a hush in the midst of all the tumult; and took him to the cottage where Death was already.

But, when they set the bier down on the threshold, they looked at one another, and at me, and whispered. I knew why. They felt as if it were not right to lay him down in the same quiet room.

We went into the town, and took our burden to the inn. So soon as I could at all collect my thoughts, I sent for Joram, and begged him to provide me a conveyance in which it could be got to London in the night.

I chose the night for the journey, that there might be less curiosity when I left the town. But, although it was nearly midnight when I came out of the yard in a chaise, followed by what I had in charge, there were many people waiting. At intervals, along the town, and even a little way out upon the road, I saw more: but at length only the bleak night and the open country were around me and the ashes of my youthful friendship.

LITTLE DORRIT.

LITTLE DORRIT.

LITTLE DORRIT had not attained her twenty-second birthday without finding a lover. Even in the sallow Marshalsea, the ever young Archer shot off a few featherless arrows now and then from a moldy bow, and winged a Collegian or two.

Little Dorrit's lover, however, was not a Collegian. He was the sentimental son of a turnkey. His father hoped, in the fullness of time, to leave him the inheritance of an unstained key, and had from his early youth familiarized him with the duties of his office, and with an ambition to retain the prison-lock in the family. While the succession was yet in abeyance, he assisted his mother in the conduct of a snug tobacco business round the corner of Horsemonger Lane (his father being a non-resident turnkey), which could usually command a neat connection within the College walls.

Years agone, when the object of his affections was wont to sit in her little arm-chair, by the high lodge-fender, Young John (family name Chivery), a year

older than herself, had eyed her with admiring wonder. When he had played with her in the yard, his favorite game had been to counterfeit locking her up in corners, and counterfeit letting her out for real kisses. When he grew tall enough to peep through the keyhole of the great lock of the main door, he had divers times set down his father's dinner, or supper, to get on as it might on the other side thereof, while he stood taking cold in one eye by dint of peeping at her through that airy perspective.

If Young John had ever slackened in his truth in the less penetrable days of his boyhood, when youth is prone to wear its boots unlaced, and is happily unconscious of digestive organs, he had soon strung it up again and screwed it tight. At nineteen his hand had inscribed in chalk on that part of the wall which fronted her lodging, on the occasion of her birthday. "Welcome, sweet nursling of the Fairies!" At twenty-three, the same hand falteringly presented cigars on Sundays to the Father of the Marshalsea and Father of the queen of his soul.

Young John was small of stature, with rather weak legs and very weak light hair. One of his eyes (perhaps the eye that used to peep through the keyhole) was also weak and looked larger than the other, as if it couldn't collect itself. Young John was gentle, likewise. But he was great of soul. Poetical, expansive, faithful.

Though too humble before the ruler of his heart to be sanguine, Young John had considered the object of his attachment in all its lights and shades. Following it out to blissful results, he had descried, without self-commendation, a fitness in it. Say things prospered, and they were united. She, the child of the Marshalsea; he, the lock-keeper. There was a fitness in that. Say he become a resident turnkey. She would officially succeed to the chamber she had rented so long. There was a beautiful propriety in that. It looked over the wall, if you stood on tiptoe; and with a trellis-work of scarlet beans and a canary or so, would become a very Arbor. There was a charming idea in that. Then, being all in all to one another, there was even an appropriate grace in the lock. With the world shut out (except that part of it which would be shut in); with its troubles and disturbances only known to them by hearsay, as they would be described by the pilgrims tarrying with them on their way to the Insolvent Shrine; with the Arbor above and the Lodge below; they would glide down the stream of time, in pastoral domestic happiness. Young John drew tears from his eyes by finishing the picture with a tombstone in the adjoining church-yard, close against the prison wall, bearing the following touching inscription: "Sacred to the Memory of JOHN CHIVERY, Sixty years Turnkey, and fifty years Head Turnkey, Of the neigh-

boring Marshalsea, who departed this life universally respected, on the thirty-first of December, One thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, Aged eighty-three years. Also of his truly beloved and truly loving wife, AMY, whose maiden name was DORRIT, Who survived his loss not quite forty-eight hours, And who breathed her last in the Marshalsea aforesaid. There she was born, There she lived, There she died."

The Chivery parents were not ignorant of their son's attachment—indeed it had, on some exceptional occasions, thrown him into a state of mind that had impelled him to conduct himself with irascibility toward the customers, and damage the business—but they, in their turns, had worked it out to desirable conclusions. Mrs. Chivery, a prudent woman, had desired her husband to take notice that their John's prospects of the Lock would certainty be strengthened by an alliance with Miss Dorrit, who had herself a kind of claim upon the College, and was much respected there. Mrs. Chivery had desired her husband to take notice that if, on the one hand, their John had means and a post of trust, on the other hand, Miss Dorrit had family: and that her (Mrs. Chivery's) sentiment was, that two halves made a whole. Mrs. Chivery, as a mother and not as a diplomatist, had then, from a different point of view, desired her husband to recollect that their John had

never been strong, and that his love had fretted and worritted him enough as it was, without his being driven to do himself a mischief, as nobody couldn't say he wouldn't be if he was crossed. These arguments had so powerfully influenced the mind of Mr. Chivery, who was a man of few words, that he had, on sundry Sunday mornings, given his boy what he termed "a lucky touch," signifying that he considered such commendation of him to Good Fortune, preparatory to his that day declaring his passion and becoming triumphant. But Young John had never taken courage to make the declaration ; and it was principally on these occasions that he had returned excited to the tobacco shop, and flown at the customers.

In this affair, as in every other, little Dorrit herself was the last person considered. Her brother and sister were aware of it, and attained a sort of station by making a peg of it on which to air the miserable ragged old fiction of the family gentility. Her sister asserted the family gentility, by flouting the poor swain as he loitered about the prison for glimpses of his dear. Tip asserted the family gentility, and his own, by coming out in the character of the aristotratic brothers, and loftily swaggering in the little skittle ground respecting seizures by the scuff of the neck, which there were looming probabilities of some gentleman unknown executing on some little puppy not mentioned. These were not the only members of

the Dorrit family who turned it to the account. No, no. The father of the Marshalsea was supposed to know nothing about the matter, of course: his poor dignity could not see so low. But he took the cigars on Sundays, and was glad to get them; and sometimes even condescended to walk up and down the yard with the donor (who was proud and hopeful then), and benignantly to smoke one in his society. With no less readiness and condescension did he receive attentions from Chivery Senior, who always relinquished his arm chair and newspaper to him, when he came into the lodge during one of the spells of duty; and who had even mentioned to him, that if he would like at any time after dusk quietly to step out into the fore-court and take a look at the street, there was not much to prevent him. If he did not avail himself of this latter civility, it was only because he had lost the relish for it; inasmuch as he took everything else he could get, and would say at times, "Extremely civil person, Chivery; very attentive man and very respectful. Young Chivery, too; really almost with a delicate perception of one's position here. A very well conducted family indeed, the Chiveries. Their behavior gratifies me."

The devoted Young John all this time regarded the family with reverence. He never dreamed of disputing their pretensions, but did homage to the miserable Mumbo Jumbo they paraded. As to resent-

ing any affront from *her* brother, he would have felt, even if he had not naturally been of a most pacific disposition, that to wag his tongue or lift his hand against that sacred gentleman would be an unhallowed act. He was sorry that his noble mind should take offense: still, he felt the fact not to be incompatible with its nobility, and sought to propitiate and conciliate that gallant soul. Her father, a gentleman in misfortune—a gentleman of a fine spirit and courtly manners, who always bore with him—he deeply honored. Her sister he considered somewhat vain and proud, but a young lady of infinite accomplishments, who could not forget the past. It was an instinctive testimony to Little Dorritt's worth, and different from all the rest, that the poor young fellow honored and loved her for being simply what she was.

The tobacco business around the corner of Horsemonger Lane was carried on in a rural establishment one story high, which had the benefit of the air from the yards of Horsemonger Lane Jail, and the advantage of a retired walk under the wall of that pleasant establishment. The business was of too modest a character to support a life-sized Highlander, but it maintained a little one on a bracket on the doorpost, who looked like a fallen Cherub that had found it necessary to take to a kilt.

From the portal thus decorated, one Sunday after

an early dinner of baked viands, Young John issued forth on his usual Sunday errand; not empty-handed, but with his offering of cigars. He was neatly attired in a plum-colored coat, with as large a collar of black velvet as his figure could carry; a silken waistcoat, bedecked with golden sprigs; a chaste neckerchief much in vogue at that day, representing a preserve of lilac pheasants on a buff ground; pantaloons so highly decorated with side stripes, that each leg was a three-stringed lute; and a hat of state, very high and hard. When the prudent Mrs. Chivery perceived that in addition to these adornments her John carried a pair of white kid gloves, and a cane like a little finger-post, surmounted by an ivory hand marshaling him in the way that he should go; and when she saw him, in his heavy marching order, turning the corner to the right, she remarked to Mr. Chivery, who was home at the time, that she thought she knew which way the wind blew.

The Collegians were entertaining a considerable number of visitors that Sunday afternoon, and their Father kept his room for the purpose of receiving presentations. After making a tour of the yard, Little Dorrit's lover with a hurried heart went up stairs, and knocked with his knuckles at the Father's door.

"Come in, come in!" said a gracious voice. The Father's voice, her father's voice, the Marshalsea's father's. He was seated in his black velvet cap,

with his newspaper, three-and-six-pence accidentally left on the table and two chairs arranged. Everything prepared for holding his Court.

"Ah, Young John! How do you do, how do you do?"

"Pretty well, I thank you, sir. I hope you are the same."

"Yes, John Chivery; yes. Nothing to complain of."

"I have taken the liberty, sir, of——"

"Eh?" The Father of the Marshalsea always lifted up his eyebrows at this point, and became amiably distraught, and smilingly absent in mind.

"—A few cigars sir."

"Oh!" (For the moment, excessively surprised.) "Thank you, Young John, thank you. But really, I am afraid I am too——No? Well, then, I will say no more about it. Put them on the mantel-shelf if yon please, Young John. And sit down, sit down. You are not a stranger, John."

"Thank you, sir, I am sure—Miss;" here Young John turned the hat round and round upon his left hand, like a slowly twirling mouse cage; "Miss Amy quite well, sir?"

"Yes, John, yes; very well. She is out."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes, John. Miss Amy is gone for an airing. My young people all go out a good deal. But at their time of life it's natural, John."

"Very much so, I am sure, sir."

"An airing. An airing. Yes." He was blandly tapping his fingers on the table, and casting his eyes at the window. "Amy has gone for an airing on the Iron Bridge. She has become quite partial to the Iron Bridge of late, and seems to like to walk there better than anywhere." He returned to conversation. "Your father is not on duty at present, I think, John?"

"No, sir, he comes on later in the afternoon." Another twirl of the great hat, and then Young John said, rising. "I am afraid I must wish you good-day, sir."

"So soon? Good-day, Young John. Nay, nay," with the utmost condescension, "never mind your glove, John. Shake hands with it on. You are no stranger here you know."

Highly gratified by the kindness of his reception, Young John descended the staircase. On his way he met some Collegians bringing up visitors to be presented, and at that moment Mr. Dorrit happened to call over the banisters with particular distinctness, "Much obliged to you for your little testimonial, John!"

Little Dorrit's lover very soon laid down his penny on the toll-plate of the Iron Bridge, and came upon it looking about him for the well-known and well-beloved figure. At first he feared she was not there; but as he walked on toward the Middlesex side, he

saw her standing still, looking at the water. She was absorbed in thought, and he wondered what she might be thinking about. There were the piles of city roofs and chimneys, more free from smoke than on week days; and there were the distant masts and steeples. Perhaps she was thinking about them.

Little Dorrit mused so long, and was so entirely preoccupied, that although her lover stood quiet for what he thought was a long time, and twice or thrice retired and came back again to the former spot, still she did not move. So, in the end, he made up his mind to go on, and seem to come upon her casually in passing, and speak to her. The place was quiet, and now or never was the time to speak to her.

He walked on, and she did not hear his steps until he was close upon her. When he said "Miss Dorrit!" she started and fell back from him, with an expression in her face of fright and something like dislike that caused him unutterable dismay. She had often avoided him before—always, indeed, for a long, long while. She had turned away and glided off, so often, when she had seen him coming toward her, that the unfortunate Young John could not think it accidental. But he hoped that it might be shyness, her retiring character, her foreknowledge of the state of his heart, anything short of aversion. Now, that

momentary look had said. "You of all people! I would rather have seen anyone on earth than you!"

It was but a momentary look, inasmuch as she choked it, and said, in her soft little voice, "Oh, Mr. John! Is it you?" But she felt what it had been, and they stood looking at one another equally confused.

"Miss Amy, I am afraid I disturbed you by speaking to you."

"Yes, rather. I—I came here to be alone, and I thought I was."

"Miss Amy, I took the liberty of walking this way, because Mr. Dorrit chanced to mention, when I called upon him, that you ——"

She caused him more dismay than before by suddenly murmuring, "O, father, father!" in a heart-rending tone, and turning her face away.

"Miss, Amy, I hope I don't give you any uneasiness by naming Mr. Dorrit. I assure you I found him very well, and in the best of spirits, and he showed me even more than his usual kindness; being so very kind as to say that I was not a stranger there, and in all ways gratifying me very much."

To the inexpressible consternation of her lover, Little Dorrit, with her hands to her averted face, and rocking herself where she stood, as if she were in pain, murmured, "O, father, how can you! O, dear, dear, father, how can you, can you, do it!"

The poor fellow stood gazing at her, overflowing with sympathy, but not knowing what to make of this, until, having taken out her handkerchief and put it to her still averted face, she hurried away. At first he remained stock still; then hurried after her.

"Miss Amy, pray! Will you have the goodness to stop a moment? Miss Amy, if it comes to that, let *me* go. I shall go out of my senses, if I have to think that I have driven you away like this."

His trembling voice and unfeigned earnestness brought Little Dorrit to a stop. "O, I don't know what to do," she cried; "I don't know what to do!"

To Young John, who had never seen her bereft of her quiet self-command, who had seen her from her infancy ever so reliable and self-suppressed, there was a shock in her distress, and in having to associate himself with it as its cause, that shook him from his great hat to the pavement. He felt it necessary to explain himself. He might be misunderstood—supposed to mean something, or to have done something, that had never entered into his imagination. He begged her to hear him explain himself, as the greatest favor she could show him.

"Miss Amy, I know very well that your family is far above mine. It were vain to conceal it. There never was a Chivery a gentleman that ever I heard of, and I will not commit the meanness of making a false representation on a subject so momentous.

Miss Amy, I know very well that your high-souled brother, and likewise your spirited sister, spurn me from a height. What I have to do is to respect them, to wish to be admitted to their friendship, to look up at the eminence on which they are placed, from my lowlier station—for, whether viewed as tobacco or viewed as the lock, I well know it is lowly—and ever wish them well and happy."

There really was a genuineness in the poor fellow, and a contrast between the hardness of his hat and the softness of his heart (albeit, perhaps, of his head, too), that was moving. Little Dorrit entreated him to disparage neither himself nor his station, and, above all things, to divest himself of any idea that she supposed hers to be superior. This gave him a little comfort.

"Miss Amy," he then stammered, "I have had for a long time—ages they seem to me—Revolving ages—a heart-cherished wish to say something to you. May I say it?"

Little Dorrit involuntarily started from his side again, with the faintest shadow of her former look; conquering that, she went on at great speed half across the bridge without replying:

"May I—Miss Amy, I but ask the question humbly—may I say it? I have been so unlucky already in giving you pain, without having any such intentions, before the holy Heavens! that there is no fear

of my saying it unless I have your leave. I can be miserable alone, I can be cut up by myself; why should I also make miserable and cut up one, that I would fling myself off that parapet to give half a moment's joy to! Not that that's much to do, for I'd do it for twopence."

The mournfulness of his spirits, and the gorgeousness of his appearance, might have made him ridiculous, but that his delicacy made him respectable. Little Dorrit learned from it what to do.

"If you please, John Chivery," she returned, trembling, but in a quiet way, "since you are so considerate as to ask me whether you shall say any more —if you please, no."

"Never, Miss Amy?"

"No, if you please. Never."

"Oh, Lord!" gasped Young John.

"But, perhaps, you will let me, instead, say something to you. I want to say it earnestly, and with as plain a meaning as it is possible to express. When you think of us, John—I mean my brother and sister, and me—don't think of us as being different from the rest; for, whatever we once were (which I hardly know) we ceased to be long ago, and never can be any more. It will be much better for you, and much better for others, if you will do that, instead of what you are doing now."

Young John dolefully protested that he would try

to bear it in mind, and would be heartily glad to do anything she wished.

"As to me," said Little Dorrit, "think as little of me as you can; the less, the better. When you think of me at all, John, let it only be as the child you have seen grow up in the prison, with one set of duties always occupying her; as a weak, retired, contented, unprotected girl. I particularly want you to remember, that when I come outside the gate, I am unprotected and solitary."

He would try to do anything she wished. But why did Miss Amy so much want him to remember that?

"Because," returned Little Dorrit, "I know I can then quite trust you not to forget to-day, and not to say any more to me. You are so generous that I know I can trust you for that; and I do, and I always will. I am going to show you at once that I fully trust you. I like this place where we are speaking, better than any place I know;" her slight color had faded, but her lover thought he saw it coming back just then; "and I may be often here. I know it is only necessary for me to tell you so, to be quite sure that you will never come here again in search of me. And I am—quite sure!"

She might rely upon it, said Young John. He was a miserable wretch, but her word was more than a law for him.

"And good-by, John," said Little Dorrit. "And

I hope you will have a good wife one day, and be a happy man. I am sure you will deserve to be happy, and you will be, John."

As she held out her hand to him with these words, the heart that was under the waistcoat of Sprigs—mere slop-work, if the truth must be known—swelled to the size of the heart of a gentleman; and the poor common little fellow having no room to hold it, burst into tears.

"O don't cry," said Little Dorrit piteously. "Don't, don't! Good-by, John. God bless you!"

"Good-by, Miss Amy. Good-by!"

And so he left her; first observing that she sat down on the corner of a seat, and not only rested her little hand upon the rough wall, but laid her face against it too, as if her head were heavy, and her mind were sad.

It was an affecting illustration of the fallacy of human projects, to behold her lover with the great hat pulled over his eyes, the velvet collar turned up as if it rained, the plum-colored coat buttoned to conceal the silken waistcoat of golden sprigs, and the little direction-post pointing inexorably home, creeping along by the worst back streets, and composing as he went the following new inscription for a tombstone in Saint George's Church-yard:

"Here lies the mortal remains of JOHN CHIVERY, Never

anything worth mentioning, Who died about the end of the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six, Of a broken heart, Requesting with his last breath that the word AMY might be inscribed over his ashes, Which was accordingly directed to be done, By his afflicted Parents."

THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.

RICHARD SWIVELLER, being often left alone, began to find the time hang heavy on his hands. For the better preservation of his cheerfulness therefore, and to prevent his faculties from rusting, he provided himself with a cribbage-board and pack of cards, and accustomed himself to play at cribbage with a dummy, for twenty, thirty, or sometimes even fifty thousand pounds a side, besides many hazardous bets to a considerable amount.

As these games were very silently conducted, notwithstanding the magnitude of the interests involved, Mr. Swiveller began to think that on those evenings when Mr. and Miss Brass were out (and they often went out now) he heard a sort of snorting or half-hard breathing sound in the direction of the door, which it occurred to him, after some reflection, must proceed from the small servant, who always had a cold from damp living. Looking intently that way one night, he plainly distinguished an eye gleaming and glistening at the keyhole; and having now no doubt that his suspicions were correct, he stole softly

to the door, and pounced upon her before she was aware of his approach.

"Oh! I didn't mean any harm indeed, upon my word I didn't," cried the small servant, struggling like a much larger one. "It's so very dull down-stairs. Please don't tell upon me, please don't."

"Tell upon you!" said Dick. "Do you mean to say you were looking through the keyhole for company?"

"Yes, upon me word I was," replied the small servant.

"How long have you been cooling your eye there?" said Dick.

"Oh ever since you first began to play them cards, and long before."

Vague recollections of several fantastic exercises with which he had refreshed himself after the fatigues of business, and to all of which, no doubt, the small servant was a party, rather disconcerted Mr. Swiveller; but he was not very sensitive on such points, and recovered himself speedily.

"Well,—come in"—he said, after a little consideration. "Here—sit down, and I'll teach you how to play."

"Oh! I durstn't do it," rejoined the small servant; "Miss Sally 'ud kill me, if she know'd I come up here."

"Have you got a fire down-stairs?" said Dick.

"A very little one," replied the small servant.

"Miss Sally couldn't kill me if she know'd I went down there, so I'll come," said Richard, putting the cards into his pocket. "Why, how thin you are! What do you mean by it?"

"It ain't my fault."

"Could you eat any bread and meat?" said Dick, taking down his hat. "Yes? Ah? I thought so. Did you ever taste beer?"

"I had a sip of it once," said the small servant.

"Here's a state of things!" cried Mr. Swiveller, raising his eyes to the ceiling. "She *never* tasted it—it can't be tasted in a sip! Why, how old are you?"

"I don't know."

Mr. Swiveller opened his eyes very wide, and appeared thoughtful for a moment; then, bidding the child mind the door until he came back, vanished straight away.

Presently, he returned, followed by the boy from the public-house, who bore in one hand a plate of bread and beef, and in the other a great pot, filled with some very fragrant compound, which sent forth a grateful steam, and was indeed choice purl, made after a particular recipe which Mr. Swiveller had imparted to the landlord, at a period when he was deep in his books and desirous to conciliate his friendship. Relieving the boy of his burden at the door and charg-

ing his little companion to fasten it to prevent surprise, Mr. Swiveller followed her into the kitchen.

"There!" said Richard, putting the plate before her. "First of all clear that off, and then you'll see what's next."

The small servant needed no second bidding, and the plate was soon empty.

"Next," said Dick, handing the purl, "take a pull at that; but moderate your transports, you know, for you're not used to it. Well, is it good?"

"Oh! isn't it?" said the small servant.

Mr. Swiveller appeared gratified beyond all expression by this reply, and took a long draught himself: steadfastly regarding his companion while he did so. These preliminaries disposed of, he applied himself to teaching her the game, which she soon learnt tolerably well, being both sharp-witted and cunning.

"Now," said Mr. Swiveller, putting two sixpences into a saucer, and trimming the wretched candle, when the cards have been cut and dealt, "those are the stakes. If you win, you get 'em all. If I win, I get 'em. To make it seem more real and pleasant, I shall call you the Marchioness, do you hear?"

The small servant nodded.

"Then, marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "fire away!"

The Marchioness, holding her cards very tight in

Dickens.

DICK SWIVELLER AND THE MARCHIONESS.

both hands, considered which to play, and Mr. Swiveller, assuming the gay and fashionable air which such society required, took another pull at the tankard, and waited for her lead.

. . . . . .

Mr. Swiveller and his partner played several rubbers with varying success, until the loss of three sixpences, the gradual sinking of the purl, and the striking of ten o'clock, combined to render that gentleman mindful of the flight of time, and the expediency of withdrawing before Mr. Sampson and Miss Sally Brass returned.

"With which object in view, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller gravely, "I shall ask your ladyship's permission to put the board in my pocket, and to retire from the presence when I have finished this tankard; merely observing, Marchioness, that since life-like a river is flowing, I care not how fast it rolls on, ma'am, on, while such purl on the bank still is growing, and such eyes light the waves as they run. Marchioness, your health. You will excuse my wearing my hat, but the palace is damp, and the marble floor is—if I may be allowed the expression —sloppy."

As a precaution against the latter inconvenience, Mr. Swiveller had been sitting for some time with his feet on the hob, in which attitude he now gave utterance to these apologetic observations, and slowly sipped the last choice drops of nectar.

"The Baron Sampsono Brasso and his fair sister are (you tell me) at the play?" said Mr. Swiveller, leaning his left arm heavily upon the table, and raising his voice and his right leg after the manner of a theatrical bandit.

The Marchioness nodded.

"Ha!" said Mr. Swiveller, with a portentious frown. "'Tis well. Marchioness!—but no matter. Some wine there. Ho!" He illustrated these melodramatic morsels, by handing the tankard to himself with great humility, receiving it haughtily, drinking from it thirstily, and smacking his lips fiercely.

The small servant who was not so well acquainted with theatrical conventionalities as Mr. Swiveller (having indeed never seen a play, or heard one spoken of, except by chance through chinks of doors and in other forbidden places), was rather alarmed by demonstrations so novel in their nature, and showed her concern so plainly in her looks, that Mr. Swiveller felt it necessary to discharge his brigand manner for one more suitable to private life, as he asked,

"Do they often go where glory waits 'em and leave you here?"

"Oh, yes; I believe you they do," returned the small servant. "Miss Sally's such a one-er for that, she is."

"Such a what?" said Dick.

"Such a one-er," returned the Marchioness.

After a moment's reflection, Mr. Swiveller determined to forego his responsible duty of setting her right, and to suffer her to talk on; as it was evident that her tongue was loosened by the purl, and her opportunities for conversation were not so frequent as to render a momentary check of little consequence.

"They sometimes go to see Mr. Quilp," said the small servant with a shrewd look; "they go to a many places, bless you!"

"Is Mr. Brass a wunner?" said Dick.

"Not half what Miss Sally is, he isn't," replied the small servant, shaking her head. "Bless you, he'd never do anything without her."

"Oh! He wouldn't, wouldn't he?" said Dick.

"Miss Sally keeps him in such order," said the small servant; "he always asks her advice, he does; and he catches it sometimes. Bless you, you wouldn't believe how much he catches it."

"I suppose," said Dick, "that they consult together, a good deal, and talk about a great many people—about me for instance, sometimes, eh, Marchioness?"

The Marchioness nodded amazingly.

"Complimentary?" said Mr. Swiveller.

The Marchioness changed the motion of her head, which had not yet left off nodding, and suddenly be-

gan to shake it from side to side, with vehemence which threatened to dislocate her neck.

"Humph!" Dick muttered. "Would it be any breach of confidence, Marchioness, to relate what they say of the humble individual who has now the honor. to——?"

"Miss Sally says you're a funny chap," replied his friend.

"Well, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "that's not uncomplimentary. Merriment, Marchioness, is not a bad or a degrading quality. Old King Cole was himself a merry old soul, if we may put any faith in the pages of history."

"But she says," pursued his companion, "that you ain't to be trusted."

"Why, really Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, thoughtfully; "several ladies and gentlemen—not exactly professional persons, but tradespeople, ma'am, tradespeople—have made the same remark. The obscure citizen who keeps the hotel over the way, inclined strongly to that opinion to-night when I ordered him to prepare the banquet. It's a popular prejudice, Marchioness; and yet I am sure I don't know why, for I have been trusted in my time to a considerable amount, and I can safely say that I never forsook my trust until it deserted me—never. Mr. Brass is of the same opinion, I suppose?"

His friend nodded again, with a cunning look

which seemed to hint that Mr. Brass held stronger opinions on the subject than his sister; and seeming to recollect herself, added imploringly, "But don't you ever tell upon me, or I shall be beat to death."

"Marchioness, said Mr. Swiveller, rising, "the word of a gentleman is as good as his bond—sometimes better, as in the present case, where his bond might prove but a doubtful sort of security. I am your friend, and I hope we shall play many more rubbers together in this same saloon. But Marchioness," added Richard, stopping in his way to the door, and wheeling slowly round upon the small servant, who was following with the candle; "it occurs to me that you must be in the constant habit of airing your eye at key-holes, to know all this."

"I only wanted," replied the trembling Marchioness, "to know where the key of the safe was hid; that was all; and I wouldn't have taken much, if I had found it—only enough to squench my hunger."

"You didn't find it then?" said Dick. "But of course you didn't, or you'd be plumper. Good-night, Marchioness. Fare thee well, and if forever, then for ever fare thee well—and put up the chain, Marchioness, in case of accidents."

With this parting injunction, Mr. Swiveller emerged from the house; and feeling that he had by this time taken quite as much to drink as promised to be good for his constitution (purl being a rather strong and

heady compound), wisely resolved to partake himself to his lodgings, and to bed at once. Homeward he went therefore; and his apartments (for he still retained the plural fiction) being at no great distance from the office, he was soon seated in his own bedchamber, where, having pulled off one boot and forgotten the other he fell into a deep cogitation.

"This Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, folding his arms, "is a very extraordinary person—surrounded by mysteries, ignorant of the taste of beer, unacquainted with her own name (which is less remarkable,) and taking a limited view of society through the keyholes of doors—can these things be her destiny, or has some unknown person started an opposition to the decrees of fate? It is a most inscrutable and unmitigated staggerer!"

When his meditations had attained this satisfactory point, he became aware of his remaining boot, of which, with unimpaired solemnity he proceeded to divest himself; shaking his head with exceeding gravity all the time, and sighing deeply.

Some men in his blighted position would have taken to drinking; but as Mr. Swiveller had taken to that before, he only took to playing the flute, thinking after mature consideration that it was a good, sound, dismal occupation, not only in unison with his own sad thoughts, but calculated to awaken a fellow-feeling in the bosoms of his neighbors. In

pursuance of this resolution, he now drew a little table to his bedside, and arranging the light and a small oblong music-box to the best advantage, took his flute from its box, and began to play most mournfully.

The air was "Away with melancholy"—a composition, which, when it is played very slowly on the flute, in bed, with the further disadvantage of being performed by a gentleman but imperfectly acquainted with the instrument, who repeats one note a great many times before he can find the next, has not a lively effect. Yet for half the night, or more, Mr. Swiveller, lying sometimes upon his back with his eyes upon the ceiling, and sometimes half out of bed to correct himself by the book, played this unhappy tune over and over again; never leaving off, save for a minute or two at a time to take breath and soliloquize about the Marchioness, and then beginning again with renewed vigor. It was not until he had quite exhausted his several subjects of meditation, and had breathed into the flute the whole sentiment of the purl down to its very dregs, and had nearly maddened the people of the house, and at both the next doors, and over the way—that he shut up the music-book, extinguished the candle, and finding himself greatly lightened and relieved in his mind, turned round and feel asleep.

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The lives of gentlemen devoted to such pleasures as Richard Swiveller, are extremely precarious. That very night, Mr. Richard was seized with an alarming illness, and in twenty-four hours was stricken with a raging fever.

Tossing to and fro upon his hot, uneasy bed; tormented by a fierce thirst which nothing could appease; unable to find, in any change of posture, a moment's peace or ease; and rambling ever through deserts of thought where there was no resting-place, no sight or sound suggestive of refreshment or repose, nothing but dull eternal weariness, with no change but the restless shiftings of his miserable body, and the weary wandering of his mind, constant still to one ever-present anxiety—to a sense of something left undone, of some fearful obstacle to be surmounted, of some carking care that would not be driven away, and which haunted the distempered brain, now in this form, now in that, always shadowy and dim, but recognizable for the same phantom in every shape it took; darkening every vision like an evil conscience, and making slumber horrible—in these slow tortures of his dread disease, the unfortunate Richard lay wasting and consuming inch by inch, until, at last, when he seemed to fight and struggle to rise up, and to be held down by devils, he sank into a deep sleep, and dreamed no more.

He awoke with a sensation of most blissful rest,

better than sleep itself, he began gradually to remember something of these sufferings, and to think what a long night it had been, and whether he had not been delirious twice or thrice. Happening, in the midst of these cogitations, to raise his hand, he was astonished to find how heavy it seemed, and yet how thin and light it really was. Still, he felt indifferent and happy ; and having no curiosity to pursue the subject, remained in the same waking slumber until his attention was attracted by a cough. This made him doubt whether he had locked his door last night, and feel a little surprised at having a companion in the room. Still, he lacked energy to follow up this train of thought; and unconsciously fell, in a luxury of repose, to staring at some green stripes on the bed-furniture, and associating them strangely with patches of fresh turf, while the yellow ground between made gravel-walks, and so helped out a long prospective of trim gardens.

He was rambling in imagination on these terraces, and had quite lost himself among them indeed, when he heard the cough once more. The walks shrunk into stripes again at the sound, and raising himself a little in the bed, and holding the curtain open with one hand, he looked out.

The same room certainly, and still by candlelight; but with what unbounded astonishment did he see all those bottles, and basins, and articles of linen

airing by the fire, and such-like furniture of a sick chamber—all very clean and neat, but all quite different from anything he had left there, when he went to bed! The atmosphere, too, filled with a cool smell of herbs and vinegar; the floor newly sprinkled; the—the what? The Marchioness?

Yes; playing cribbage with herself at the table. There she sat, intent upon her game, coughing now and then in a subdued manner as if she feared to disturb him—shuffling the cards, cutting, dealing, playing, counting, pegging—going through all the mysteries of cribbage as if she had been in full practice from her cradle!

Mr. Swiveller contemplated these things for a short time, and suffering the curtain to fall into its former position, laid his head on the pillow again.

"I'm dreaming," thought Richard, "that's clear. When I went to bed my hands were not made of egg-shells; and now I can almost see through 'em. If this is not a dream, I have woke up, by mistake, in an Arabian Night, instead of a London one. But I have no doubt I'm asleep. Not in the least."

Here the small servant had another cough.

"Very remarkable!" thought Mr. Swiveller. "I never dreamt such a real cough as that before. I don't know, indeed, that I ever dreamt either a cough or sneeze. Perhaps it's part of the philosophy of dreams that one never does. There's another—and another—I say!—I'm dreaming rather fast!"

For the purpose of testing his real condition, Mr. Swiveller, after some reflection, pinched himself in the arm.

"Queerer still!" he thought. "I came to bed rather plump than otherwise, and now there's nothing to lay hold of. I'll take another survey."

The result of this additional inspection was, to convince Mr. Swiveller that the objects by which he was surrounded were real, and that he saw them, beyond all question, with his waking eyes.

"It's an Arabian Night; that's what it is," said Richard. "I'm in Damascus or Grand Cairo. The Marchioness is a Genie, and having had a wager with another Genie about who is the handsomest young man alive, and the worthiest to be the husband of the Princess of China, has brought me away, room and all, to compare us together. Perhaps," said Mr. Swiveller, turning languidly around on his pillow. and looking on that side of the bed which was next the wall, "the Princesss may be still—No, she's gone."

Not feeling quite satisfied with this explanation, as, even taking it to be the correct one, it still involved a little mystery and doubt, Mr. Swiveller raised the curtain, determined to take the first favorable opportunity of addressing his companion. An occasion soon presented itself. The Marchioness dealt, turned up a knave, and omitted to take the usual advan-

tage; upon which Mr. Swiveller called out as loud as he could: "Two for his heels!"

The Marchioness jumped up quickly, and clapped her hands. "Arabian Night, certainly," thought Mr. Swiveller; "they always clap their hands instead of ringing the bell. Now, for the two thousand black slaves, with jars of jewels on their heads!"

It appeared, however, that she had only clapped her hands for joy; as directly afterwards she began to laugh, and then to cry; declaring, not in choice Arabic, but in familiar English, that she was "so glad she didn't know what to do."

"Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, thoughtfully, "be pleased to draw nearer. First of all, will you have the goodness to inform me where I shall find my voice; and secondly, what has become of my flesh?"

The Marchioness only shook her head mournfully and cried again; whereupon Mr. Swiveller (being very weak) felt his own eyes affected likewise.

"I begin to infer, from your manner, and these appearances, Marchioness," said Richard, after a pause, and smiling with a trembling lip, "that I have been ill."

"You just have!" replied the small servant, wiping her eyes. "And haven't you been a talking nonsense!"

"Oh!" said Dick. "Very ill, Marchioness, have I been?"

"Dead, all but," replied the small servant. "I never thought you'd get better. Thank Heaven you have!"

Mr. Swiveller was silent for a long while. By and by, he began to talk again; inquiring how long he had been there.

"Three weeks to-morrow," replied the small servant.

"Three what?" said Dick.

"Weeks," returned the Marchioness emphatically; "three long, slow, weeks."

The bare thought of having been in such extremity, caused Richard to fall into another silence, and to lie flat down again, at his full length. The Marchioness, having arranged the bed-clothes more comfortably, and felt that his hands and forehead were quite cool—a discovery that filled her with delight—cried a little more, and then applied herself to getting tea ready, and making some thin dry toast.

While she was thus engaged, Mr. Swiveller looked on with a grateful heart, very much astonished to see how thoroughly at home she made herself, and attributing this attention, in its origin, to Sally Brass, whom, in his own mind, he could not thank enough. When the Marchioness had finished her toasting,

she spread a clean cloth on a tray, and brought him some crisp slices and a great basin of weak tea, with which (she said) the doctor had left word he might refresh himself when he awoke. She propped him up with pillows, if not as skillfully as if she had been a professional nurse all her life, at least as tenderly; and looked on with unutterable satisfaction while the patient—stopping every now and then to shake her by the hand—took his poor meal with an appetite and relish, which the greatest dainties of the earth, under any other circumstances, would have failed to provoke. Having cleared away, and disposed everything comfortably about him again, she sat down at the table to take her own tea.

"Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "how is Sally?"

The small servant screwed her face into an expression of the very utmost entanglement of slyness and shook her head.

"What, haven't you seen her lately?" said Dick.

"Seen her!" cried the small servant. "Bless you, I've run away!"

Mr. Swiveller immediately laid himself down again quite flat, and so he remained for about five minutes. By slow degrees he resumed his sitting posture after that lapse of time, and inquired:

"And where do you live, Marchioness?"

"Live!" cried the small servant. "Here!"

"Oh!" said Mr. Swiveller.

And with that he fell down flat again, as suddenly as if he had been shot. Thus he remained, motionless and bereft of speech, until she had finished her meal, put everything in its place, and swept the hearth; when he motioned her to bring a chair to the bed-side, and, being propped up again, opened a farther conversation.

"And so," said Dick, "you have run away?"

"Yes," said the Marchioness, "and they've been a tizing of me."

"Been—I beg your pardon," said Dick—"what have they been doing?"

"Been a tizing of me—tizing you know—in the newspapers," rejoined the Marchioness.

"Ay, ay," said Dick, "advertising?"

The small servant nodded, and winked. Her eyes were so red with waking and crying, that the Tragic Muse might have winked with greater consistency. And so Dick felt.

"Tell me," said he, "how it was that you thought of coming here."

"Why, you see," returned the Marchioness, "when you was gone, I hadn't any friend at all, because the lodger he never come back, and I didn't know where either him or you was to be found, you know. But one morning, when I was——"

"Was near a key-hole?" suggested Mr. Swiveller, observing that she faltered.

"Well then," said the small servant, nodding; "when I was near the office key-hole—as you see me through, you know—I heard somebody saying that she lived here, and was the lady whose house you lodged at, and that you was took very bad, and wouldn't nobody come and take care of you. Mr. Brass, he says, 'It's no business of mine,' he says; and Miss Sally, she says, 'He's a funny chap, but it's no business of mine;' and the lady went away, and slammed the door to, when she went out, I can tell you. So I run away that night, and come here, and told 'em you was my brother, and they believed me, and I've been here ever since."

"This poor little Marchioness has been wearing herself to death!" cried Dick.

"No I haven't," she returned, "not a bit of it. Don't you mind about me. I like sitting up, and I've often had a sleep, bless you, in one of them chairs. But if you could have seen how you tried to jump out o' winder, and if you could have heard how you used to keep on singing and making speeches, you wouldn't have believed it—I'm so glad you're better, Mr. Liverer."

"Liverer indeed!" said Dick thoughtfully. "It's well I *am* a liverer. I strongly suspect I should have died, Marchioness, but for you."

At this point, Mr. Swiveller took the small servant's hand in his, again, and being as we have

seen, but poorly, might in struggling to express his thanks have made his eyes as red as hers, but that she quickly changed the theme by making him lie down, and urging him to keep very quiet.

"The doctor," she told him, "said you was to be kept quite still, and there was to be no noise or nothing. Now, take a rest, and then we'll talk again. I'll sit by you, you know. If you shut your eyes, perhaps you'll go to sleep. You'll be all the better for it, if you do."

The Marchioness, in saying these words, brought a little table to the bed side, took her seat at it, and began to work away at the concoction of some cooling drink, with the address of a score of chemists. Richard Swiveller, being indeed fatigued, fell into a slumber, and waking in about half an hour, inquired what time it was.

"Just gone half after six," replied his small friend, helping him to sit up again.

"Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, plucking off his night-cap and flinging it to the other end of the room; "if you'll do me the favor to retire for a few minutes and see what sort of a night it is, I'll get up."

"You mustn't think of such a thing," cried his nurse.

"I must indeed," said the patient, looking around the room. "Whereabouts are my clothes?"

"Oh, I'm so glad—you haven't got any," replied Marchioness.

"Ma'am!" said Mr. Swiveller, in great astonishment.

"I've been obliged to sell them, every one, to get the things that was ordered for you. But don't take on about that," urged the Marchioness, as Dick fell back upon his pillow. "You're too weak to stand, indeed."

"I suppose," said Dick, "there's nothing left—not so much as a waistcoat even?"

"No, nothing."

"It's embarrassing," said Mr. Swiveller, "in case of fire—even an umbrella would be something—but you did quite right, dear Marchioness. I should have died without you!"

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Mr. Swiveller, recovering very slowly from his illness, bought for the Marchioness a handsome stock of clothes, and put her to school forthwith. After casting about for some time for a name that should be worthy of her, he decided in favor of Sophronia Sphynx, as being euphonious and genteel, and furthermore indicative of mystery. Under this title the Marchioness repaired, in tears, to the school of his selection, from which, as she soon distanced all competitors, she was removed before the lapse of

many quarters to one of a higher grade. It is but bare justice to Mr. Swiveller to say, that, although the expenses of her education kept him in straitened circumstances for half dozen years, he never slackened in his zeal, and always held himself sufficiently repaid by the accounts he heard (with great gravity) of her advancement, on his monthly visits to the governess, who looked upon him as a literary gentleman of eccentric habits, and of a most prodigious talent in quotation.

In a word, Mr. Swiveller kept the Marchioness at this establishment until she was, at a moderate guess, full nineteen years of age—good-looking, clever, and good-humored; when he began to consider seriously what was to be done next. On one of his periodical visits, while he was revolving this question in his mind, the Marchioness came down to him, alone, looking more smiling and more fresh than ever. Then, it occurred to him, but not for the first time, that if she would marry him, how comfortable they might be! So Richard asked her; whatever she said, it wasn't No; and they were married in good earnest that day week. Which gave Mr. Swiveller frequent occasion to remark at divers subsequent periods that there had been a young lady saving up for him after all.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

A RIDE of two hundred and odd miles in severe weather is one of the best softeners of a hard bed that ingenuity can devise. Perhaps it is even a sweetener of dreams, for those which hovered over the rough couch of Nicholas, and whispered their airy nothings in his ear, were of an agreeable and happy kind. He was making his fortune very fast indeed, when the faint glimmer of an expiring candle shone before his eyes, and a voice he had no difficulty in recognizing as part and parcel of Mr. Squeers, admonished him that it was time to rise.

"Past seven, Nickleby," said Mr. Squeers.

"Has morning come already?" asked Nicholas, sitting up in bed.

"Ah! that has it," replied Squeers, "and ready iced too. Now, Nickleby, come; tumble up, will you?"

Nicholas needed no further admonition, but "tumbled up" at once, and proceeded to dress himself by the light of the taper which Mr. Squeers carried in his hand.

"Here's a pretty go," said that gentleman; "the pump's froze."

"Indeed!" said Nicholas, not much interested in the intelligence.

"Yes," replied Squeers. "You can't wash yourself this morning."

"Not wash myself!" exclaimed Nicholas.

"No, not a bit of it," rejoined Squeers, tartly. "So you must be content with giving yourself a dry polish till we break the ice in the well, and get a bucketful out for the boys. Don't stand staring at me, but look sharp, will you?"

Offering no further observation, Nicholas huddled on his clothes. Squeers, meanwhile, opened the shutters and blew the candle out; when the voice of his amiable consort was heard in the passage, demanding admittance.

"Come in, my love," said Squeers.

Mrs. Squeers came in, still habited in the primitive night-jacket which had displayed the symmetry of her figure on the previous night, and further ornamented with a beaver bonnet of some antiquity, which she wore, with much ease and lightness, on the top of the nightcap before mentioned.

"Drat the things!" said the lady, opening the cupboard; "I can't find the school-spoon anywhere."

"Never mind it, my dear," observed Squeers, in a soothing manner; "it's of no consequence."

"No consequence! Why, how you talk!" retorted Mrs. Squeers, sharply; "isn't it brimstone morning?"

"I forgot, my dear," rejoined Squeers; "yes, it certainly is. We purify the boys' blood now and then, Nickleby."

"Purify fiddlesticks' ends," said his lady. "Don't think, young man, that we go to the expense of flower of brimstone and molasses, just to purify them; because if you think we carry on the business in that way, you'll find yourself mistaken, and so I tell you plainly."

"My dear," said Squeers, frowning. "Hem!"

"Oh! nonsense," rejoined Mrs. Squeers. "If the young man comes to be a teacher here, let him understand at once that we don't want any foolery about the boys. They have the brimstone and treacle, partly because if they hadn't something or other in the way of medicine they'd be always ailing and giving a world of trouble, and partly because it spoils their appetites and comes cheaper than breakfast and dinner. So it does them good and us good at the same time, and that's fair enough, I'm sure,"

Having given this explanation, Mrs. Squeers put her hand into the closet, and instituted a stricter search after the spoon, in which Mr. Squeers assisted.

A few words passed between them while they were

thus engaged, but as their voices were partially stifled by the cupboard, all that Nicholas could distinguish was that Mr. Squeers said what Mrs. Squeers had said was injudicious, and that Mrs. Squeers said what Mr. Squeers said was "stuff."

A vast deal of searching and rummaging ensued, and it proving fruitless, Smike was called in, and pushed by Mrs. Squeers, and boxed by Mr. Squeers; which course of treatment brightening his intellects, enabled him to suggest that possibly Mrs. Squeers might have the spoon in her pocket, as indeed turned out to be the case. As Mrs. Squeers had previously protested, however, that she was quite certain she had not got it, Smike received another box on the ear for presuming to contradict his mistress, together with a promise of a sound thrashing if he were not more respectful in future; so that he took nothing very advantageous by his motion.

"A most invaluable woman, that, Nickleby," said Squeers, when his consort had hurried away, pushing the drudge before her.

"Indeed, sir!" observed Nicholas.

"I don't know her equal," said Squeers; "I do not know her equal. That woman, Nickleby, is always the same—always the same bustling, lively, active, saving creetur that you see her now."

Nicholas sighed involuntarily at the thought of the agreeable domestic prospect thus opened to him;

but Squeers was, fortunately, too much occupied with his own reflections to perceive it.

"It's my way to say, when I am up in London," continued Squeers, "that to them boys she is a mother. But she is more than a mother to them: ten times more. She does things for them boys, Nickleby, that I don't believe half the mothers going would do for their own sons."

"I should think they would not, sir," answered Nicholas.

Now, the fact was, that both Mr. and Mrs. Squeers viewed the boys in the light of their proper and natural enemies; or, in other words, they held and considered that their business and profession was to get as much from every boy as could be screwed out of him. On this point they were both agreed and behaved in unison accordingly. The only difference between them was, that Mrs. Squeers waged war against the enemy openly and fearlessly, and that Squeers covered his rascality, even at home, with a spice of his habitual deceit; as if he really had a notion of some day or other being able to take himself in, and persuade his own mind that he was a very good fellow.

"But come," said Squeers, interrupting the progress of some thoughts to this effect in the mind of his usher, "let's go into the school-room; and lend me a hand with my school-coat, will you?"

Nicholas assisted his master to put on an old fustian shooting-jacket, which he took down from a peg in the passage; and Squeers, arming himself with his cane, led the way across a yard, to a door in the rear of the house.

"There," said the schoolmaster, as they stepped in together, "this is our shop, Nickleby!"

It was such a crowded scene, and there were so many objects to attract attention, that at first Nicholas stared about him, really without seeing anything at all. By degrees, however, the place resolved itself into a bare and dirty room, with a couple of windows, whereof a tenth part might be of glass, the remainder being stopped up with old copybooks and paper. There were a couple of long old rickety desks, cut and notched, and inked, and damaged in every possible way; two or three forms; a detached desk for Squeers, and another for his assistant. The ceiling was supported, like that of a barn, by cross-beams and rafters; and the walls were so stained and discolored, that it was impossible to tell whether they had ever been touched with paint or whitewash.

But the pupils—the young noblemen! How the last faint traces of hope, the remotest glimmering of any good to be derived from his efforts in this den, faded from the mind of Nicholas as he looked in dismay around! Pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, children with the countenances of old

men, deformities with irons upon their limbs, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies, all crowded on the view together; there were the bleared eye, the hare-lip, the crooked foot, and every ugliness or distortion that told of unnatural aversion conceived by parents for their offspring, or of young lives which, from the earliest dawn of infancy, had been one horrible endurance of cruelty and neglect. There were little faces which should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen, dogged suffering; there was childhood with the light of its eye quenched, its beauty gone, and its helplessness alone remaining; there were vicious-faced boys, brooding, with leaden eyes, like malefactors in a jail; and there were young creatures on whom the sins of their frail parents had descended, weeping even for the mercenary nurses they had known, and lonesome even in their loneliness. With every kindly sympathy and affection blasted in its birth, with every young and healthy feeling flogged and starved down, with every revengeful passion that can fester in swollen hearts, eating its evil way to their core in silence, what an incipient Hell was breeding here!

And yet this scene, painful as it was, had its grotesque features, which, in a less interested observer than Nicholas, might have provoked a smile. Mrs. Squeers stood at one of the desks, presiding over an

immense basin of brimstone and treacle, of which delicious compound she administered a large installment to each boy in succession: using for the purpose a common wooden spoon, which might have been originally manufactured for some gigantic top, and which widened every young gentleman's mouth considerably; they being all obliged, under heavy corporal penalties, to take in the whole of the bowl at a gasp. In another corner, huddled together for companionship, were the little boys who had arrived on the preceding night, three of them in very large leather breeches, and two in old trousers, a somewhat tighter fit than drawers are usually worn; at no great distance from these was seated a juvenile son and heir of Mr. Squeers—a striking likeness of his father—kicking with great vigor under the hands of Smike, who was fitting upon him a pair of new boots that bore almost suspicious resemblance to those which the least of the little boys had worn on the way down—as the little boy himself seemed to think, for he was regarding the appropriation with a look of most rueful amazement. Besides these, there was a long row of boys waiting, with countenances of no pleasant anticipation, to be treacled; and another file, who had just escaped from the infliction, making a variety of wry mouths, indicative of anything but satisfaction. The whole were attired in such motley, ill-sorted, extraordinary garments, as would have

been irresistibly ridiculous, but for the foul appearance of dirt, disorder and disease with which they were associated.

"Now," said Squeers, giving the desk a great rap with his cane, which made half the little boys nearly jump out of their boots, "is that physicking over?"

"Just over," said Mrs. Squeers, choking the last boy in her hurry, and tapping the crown of his head with the wooden spoon to restore him. "Here, you Smike; take this away now. Look sharp!"

Smike shuffled out with the basin, and Mrs. Squeers, having called up a little boy with a curly head and wiped her hands upon it, hurried out after him into a species of wash-house, where there was a small fire and a large kettle, together with a number of little wooden bowls which were arranged upon a board.

Into these bowls, Mrs. Squeers, assisted by the hungry servant, poured a brown composition, which looked like diluted pincushions without the covers, and was called porridge. A minute wedge of brown bread was inserted in each bowl, and when they had eaten the porridge by means of the bread, the boys ate the bread itself, and had finished their breakfast, whereupon Mr. Squeers said, in a solemn voice: "For what we have received, may the Lord make us truly thankful!"—and went away to his own.

Nicholas distended his stomach with a bowl of porridge, for much the same reason which induces some savages to swallow earth—lest they should be inconveniently hungry when there is nothing to eat. Having further disposed of a slice of bread and butter, allotted to him in virtue of his office, he sat himself down to wait for school time.

He could not but observe how silent and sad the boys all seemed to be. There was none of the noise and clamor of a school-room; none of its boisterous play or hearty mirth. The children sat crouching and shivering together, and seemed to lack the spirit to move about. The only pupil who evinced the slightest tendency toward locomotion or playfulness was Master Squeers, and as his chief amusement was to tread upon the other boys' toes, in his new boots, his flow of spirits was rather disagreeable than otherwise.

After some half-hour's delay, Mr. Squeers reappeared, and the boys took their places and their books, of which latter commodity the average might be about one to eight learners. A few minutes having elapsed, during which Mr. Squeers looked very profound, as if he had a perfect apprehension of what was inside all the books, and could say every word of their contents by heart if he only chose to take the trouble, that gentleman called up the first class.

Obedient to this summons, there ranged themselves in front of the school-master's desk half-a-dozen scarecrows, out at knees and elbows, one of whom placed a torn and filthy book beneath his learned eye.

"This is the first-class in English spelling and philosophy, Nickleby," said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him.

"We'll get up a Latin one, and hand that over to you. Now, then, where's the first boy?"

"Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlor window," said the temporary head of the philosophical class.

"So he is, to be sure," rejoined Squeers. "We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. It's just the same principle as the use of the globes. Where's the second boy?"

"Please, sir, he's weeding the garden," replied a small voice.

"To be sure," said Squeers, by no means disconcerted. "So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, bottin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows

'em. That's our system, Nickleby; what do you think of it?"

"It's a very useful one, at any rate," answered Nicholas.

"I believe you," rejoined Squeers, not remarking the emphasis of his usher. "Third boy, what's a horse?"

"A beast, sir," replied the boy.

"So it is," said Squeers. "Ain't it, Nickleby?"

"I believe there is no doubt of that, sir," answered Nicholas.

"Of course there isn't," said Squeers. "A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as everybody that's gone through the grammar knows, or else where's the use of having grammars at all?"

"Where indeed?" said Nicholas, abstractedly.

"As you're perfect in that," resumed Squeers, turning to the boy, "go and look after *my* horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of the class go and draw water up, till somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing-day to-morrow, and they want the copper filled."

So saying, he dismissed the first class to their experiments in practical philosophy, and eyed Nicholas with a look, half cunning and half doubtful, as if he were not altogether certain what he might think of him by this time.

"That's the way we do it, Nickleby," he said,

after a pause. Nicholas shrugged his shoulders in a manner that was scarcely perceptible, and said he saw it was.

"And a very good way it is, too," said Squeers. "Now, just take them fourteen little boys and hear them some reading, because, you know, you must begin to be useful. Idling about here won't do.''

Mr. Squeers said this, as if it suddenly occurred to him either that he must not say too much to his assistant, or that his assistant did not say enough to him in the praise of the establishment. The children were arranged in a semi-circle round their new master, and he was soon listening to their dull, drawling, hesitating recital of those stories of engrossing interest which are to be found in the more antiquated spelling-books.

In this exciting occupation, the morning lagged heavily on. At one o'clock, the boys, having previously had their appetites taken away by stirabout and potatoes, sat down in the kitchen to some hard salt beef, of which Nicholas was graciously permitted to take his portion to his own solitary desk, to eat it there in peace. After this, there was another hour of crouching in the school-room and shivering with cold, and then school began again.

It was Mr. Squeers' custom to call the boys together, and make a sort of report, after every half yearly visit to the metropolis, regarding the relations

and friends he had seen, the news he had heard, the letters he had brought down, the bills which had been paid, the accounts which had been left unpaid, and so forth. This solemn proceeding always took place in the afternoon of the day succeeding his return; perhaps, because the boys acquired strength of mind from the suspense of the morning, or possibly, because Mr. Squeers himself acquired greater sternness and inflexibility from certain warm potations in which he was wont to indulge after his early dinner. Be this as it may, the boys were recalled from house window, garden, stable, and cow-yard, and the school were assembled in full conclave, when Mr. Squeers, with a small bundle of papers in his hand, and Mrs. S. following with a pair of canes, entered the room and proclaimed silence.

"Let any boy speak a word without leave," said Mr. Squeers, mildly, "and I'll take the skin off his back."

This special proclamation had the desired effect, and a death-like silence immediately prevailed, in the midst of which Mr. Squeers went on to say:

"Boys, I have been to London, and have returned to my family and you, as strong and well as ever."

According to half-yearly custom, the boys gave three feeble cheers at this refreshing intelligence. Such cheers! Sign of extra strength with the chill on.

"I have seen the parents of some boys," continued Squeers, turning over his papers, "and they're so glad to hear how their sons are getting on, that there's no prospect at all of their going away, which of cou,se is a very pleasant thing to reflect upon, for all parties."

Two or three hands went to two or three eyes when Squeers said this, but the greater part of the young gentlemen having no particular parents to speak of, were wholly uninterested in the thing one way or other.

"I have had disappointments to contend against," said Squeers, looking very grim; "Bolder's father was two pound ten short. Where is Bolder?"

"Here he is, please sir," rejoined twenty officious voices. Boys are very like men to be sure.

"Come here, Bolder," said Squeers.

An unhealthy looking boy, with warts all over his hands, stepped from his place to the master's desk, and raised his eyes imploringly to Squeers' face; his own, quite white from the rapid beating of his heart.

"Bolder," said Squeers, speaking very slowly, for he was considering, as the saying goes, where to have him. "Bolder, if your father thinks that because—why, what's this, sir?"

As Squeers spoke, he caught up the boy's hand by the cuff of his jacket, and surveyed it with an edifying aspect of horror and disgust.

"What do you call this, sir?" demanded the schoolmaster, administering a cut with the cane to expedite the reply.

"I can't help it, indeed, sir," rejoined the boy, crying. "They will come; it's the dirty work, I think, sir—at least I don't know what it is, sir, but it's not my fault."

"Bolder," said Squeers, tucking up his wristbands, and moistening the palm of his right hand to get a good grip of the cane, "you are an incorrigible young scoundrel, and as the last thrashing did you no good, we must see what another will do toward beating it out of you."

With this, and wholly disregarding a piteous cry for mercy, Mr. Squeers fell upon the boy and caned him soundly; not leaving off indeed, until his arm was tired out.

"There," said Squeers, when he had quite done; "rub away as hard as you like, you wont rub that off in a hurry. Oh! you won't hold that noise, won't you? Put him out, Smike."

The drudge knew better, from long experience, than to hesitate about obeying, so he bundled the victim out by a side door, and Mr. Squeers perched himself again on his own stool, supported by Mrs. Squeers, who occupied another by his side.

"Now let us see," said Squeers. "A letter for Cobbey. Stand up, Cobbey."

Another boy stood up, and eyed the letter very hard while Squeers made a mental abstract of the same.

"Oh!" said Squeers; "Cobbey's grandmother is dead, and his uncle John has took to drinking, which is all the news his sister sends, except eighteen pence, which will just pay for that broken square of glass. Mrs. Squeers, my dear, will you take the money?"

The worthy lady pocketed the eighteen pence with a most business-like air, and Squeers passed on to the next boy, as cooly as possible.

"Graymarsh," said Squeers, "he's the next. Stand up, Graymarsh."

Another boy stood up, and the schoolmaster looked over the letter as before.

"Graymarsh's maternal aunt," said Squeers, when he had possessed himself of the contents, "is very glad to hear he's so well and happy, and sends her respectful compliments to Mrs. Squeers, and thinks she must be an angel. She likewise thinks Mr. Squeers is too good for this world; but hopes he may long be spared to carry on the business. Would have sent the two pair of stockings as desired, but is short of money, so forwards a tract instead, and hopes Graymarsh will put his trust in Providence. Hopes, above all, that he will study in everything to please Mr. and Mrs. Squeers, and look upon them as his only friends; and that he will love Master

Squeers; and not object to sleeping five in a bed, which no Christian should. Ah!" said Squeers, folding it up, "a delightful letter. Very affecting indeed."

It was affecting in one sense, for Graymarsh's maternal aunt was strongly supposed, by her more intimate friends, to be no other than his maternal parent; Squeers, however, without alluding to this part of the story (which would have sounded immoral before boys) proceeded with the business by calling out "Mobbs," whereupon another boy rose, and Graymarsh resumed his seat.

"Mobbs' m other-in-law," said Squeers, "took to bed on hearing that he wouldn't eat fat, and has been very ill ever since. She wishes to know by an early post, where he expects to go to if he quarrels with his vittles; and with what feelings he could turn up his nose at the cow's liver broth, after his good master had asked a blessing on it. This was told her in the London newspapers—not by Mr. Squeers, for he is too kind and too good to set anybody against anybody—and it has vexed her so much, Mobbs can't think. She is sorry to find he is so discontented, which is sinful and horrid, and hopes Mr. Squeers will flog him into a happier state of mind; with this view, she has also stopped his half penny a week pocket money, and given a double-bladed knife with a corkscrew in it to the Missionaries, which she had bought on purpose for him."

"A sulky state of feeling," said Squeers, after a terrible pause, during which he had moistened the palm of his right hand again, "won't do. Cheerfulness and contentment must be kept up. Mobbs, come to me!"

Mobbs moved slowly toward the desk, rubbing his eyes in anticipation of good cause for doing so; and he soon afterward retired by the side door, with as good cause as a boy need have.

Mr. Squeers then proceeded to open a miscellaneous collection of letters; some inclosing money, which Mrs. Squeers "took care of;" and others referring to small articles of apparel, as caps and so forth, all of which the same lady stated to be too large, or too small, and calculated for nobody but young Squeers, who would appear indeed to have had most accommodating limbs, since everything that came into the school fitted him to a nicety. His head, in particular, must have been singularly elastic, for hats and caps of all dimensions were alike to him.

The business dispatched, a few slovenly lessons were performed, and Squeers retired to his fireside, leaving Nicholas to take care of the boys in the Schoolroom, which was very cold, and where a meal of bread and cheese was served out shortly after dark.

There was a small stove at that corner of the room

which was nearest to the master's desk, and by it Nicholas sat down, so depressed and self-degraded by the consciousness of his position, that if death could have come upon him at that time, he would have been almost happy to meet it. The cruelty of which he had been an unwilling witness, the coarse and ruffianly behavior of Squeers, even in his best moods, the filthy place, the sights and sounds about him, all contributed to this state of feeling; but when he recollected that, being there as an assistant, he actually seemed—no matter what unhappy train of circumstances had brought him to that pass—to be the aider and abettor of a system which filled him with honest disgust, and indignation, he loathed himself, and felt, for the moment, as though the mere consciousness of his present situation must, through all time to come, prevent his raising his head again.

But, for the present, his resolve was taken, and the resolution he had formed on the preceding night, remained undisturbed. He had written to his mother and sister, announcing the safe conclusion of his journey, and saying as little about Dotheboy's Hall, and saying that little as cheerfully, as he possibly could. He hoped that by remaining where he was, he might do some good, even there; at all events, others depended too much on his uncle's favor, to admit of his awakening his wrath just then.

As he was absorbed in these meditations he all at

once encountered the upturned face of Smike, who was on his knees before the stove, picking a few stray cinders from the hearth and planting them on the fire. He had paused to steal a look at Nicholas, and when he saw that he was observed, shrunk back as if expecting a blow.

"You need not fear me," said Nicholas, kindly. "Are you cold?"

"N-n-o."

"You are shivering."

"I am not cold," replied Smike, quickly. "I am used to it."

There was such an obvious fear of giving offense in his manner, and he was such a timid, broken-spirited creature, that Nicholas could not help exclaiming, "Poor fellow!"

If he had struck the drudge, he would have slunk away without a word. But now he burst into tears.

"Oh, dear, oh dear!" he cried, covering his face with his cracked and horny hands. "My heart will break. It will, it will!"

"Hush," said Nicholas, laying his hand upon his shoulder. "Be a man; you are nearly one by years, God help you!"

"By years!" cried Smike. "Oh dear, dear, how many of them! How many of them since I was a little child, younger than any that are here now! Where are they all?"

"Whom do you speak of?" inquired Nicholas, wishing to rouse the poor half-witted creature to reason. "Tell me."

"My friends," he replied, "myself—my—oh! what sufferings mine have been!"

"There is always hope," said Nicholas; he knew not what to say.

"No," rejoined the other; "no, none for me. Do you remember the boy that died here?"

"I was not here, you know," said Nicholas, gently; "but what of him?"

"Why," replied the youth, drawing closer to his questioner's side, "I was with him at night, and when it was all silent he cried no more for friends he wished to come and sit with him; but began to see faces round his bed that came from home; he said they smiled and talked to him; and he died at last lifting his head to kiss them. Do you hear?"

"Yes, yes," rejoined Nicholas.

"What faces will smile on me when I die!" cried his companion, shivering. "Who will talk to me in those long nights! They cannot come from home; they would frighten me if they did, for I don't know what it is, and shouldn't know them. Pain and fear, pain and fear for me, alive or dead. No hope, no hope!"

The bell rang to bed; and the boy, subsiding at the sound into his usual listless state, crept away as

if anxious to avoid notice. It was with a heavy heart that Nicholas soon afterward—no, not retired; there was no retirement there—followed, to his dirty and crowded dormitory.

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The wretched creature, Smike, since the night Nicholas had spoken kindly to him in the school-had followed him to and fro, with an ever restless desire to serve or help him; anticipating such little wants as his humble ability could supply, and content only to be near him. He would sit beside him for hours, looking patiently into his face; and a word would brighten up his careworn visage, and call into it a passing gleam, even of happiness. He was an altered being; he had an object now; and that object was, to show his attachment to the only person—that person a stranger—who had treated him, not to say with kindness, but like a human creature.

Upon this poor being, all the spleen and ill-humor that could not be vented on Nicholas were unceasingly bestowed. Drudgery would have been nothing—Smike was well used to that. Buffetings inflicted without cause, would have been equally a matter of course; for to them also he had served a long and weary apprenticeship; but it was no sooner observed that he had become attached to Nicholas, than stripes

and blows, morning, noon, and night, were his only portion. Squeers was jealous of the influence which his man had so soon acquired, and his family hated him, and Smike paid for both. Nicholas saw it, and ground his teeth at every repetition of the savage and cowardly attack.

He had arranged a few regular lessons for the boys; and one night as he paced up and down the dismal school-room, his swollen heart almost bursting to think that his protection and countenance should have increased the misery of the wretched being whose peculiar destitution had awakened his pity, he paused mechanically in a dark corner where sat the object of his thoughts.

The poor soul was poring hard over a tattered book, with the traces of recent tears still upon his face, vainly endeavoring to master some task which a child of nine years old, possessed of ordinary powers, could have conquered with ease, but which, to the addled brain of the crushed boy of nineteen, was a sealed and hopeless mystery. Yet there he sat, patiently conning the page again and again, stimulated by no boyish ambition, for he was the common jest and scoff even of the uncouth objects that congregated about him, but inspired by the one eager desire to please his solitary friend.

Nicholas laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"I can't do it," said the dejected creature, looking

up with bitter disappointment in every feature. "No, no."

"Do not try," replied Nicholas.

The boy shook his head, and, closing the book with a sigh, looked vacantly round, and laid his head upon his arm. He was weeping.

"Do not, for God sake," said Nicholas, in an agitated voice; "I cannot bear to see you."

"They are more hard with me than ever," sobbed the boy.

"I know it," rejoined Nicholas. "They are."

"But for you," said the outcast, "I should die. They would kill me; they would; I know they would."

"You will do better, poor fellow," replied Nicholas, shaking his head mournfully, "when I am gone."

"Gone!" cried the other, looking intently in his face.

"Softly!" rejoined Nicholas. "Yes."

"Are you going?" demanded the boy, in an earnest whisper.

"I cannot say," replied Nicholas. "I was speaking more to my own thoughts than to you."

"Tell me," said the boy, imploringly, "oh, do tell me, *will* you go—*will* you?"

"I shall be driven to that at last!" said Nicholas. "The world is before me, after all."

"Tell me," urged Smike, "is the world as bad and dismal as this place?"

"Heaven forbid!" replied Nicholas, pursuing the train of his own thoughts. "Its hardest, coarsest toil were happiness to this."

"Should I ever meet you there?" demanded the boy, speaking with unusual wildness and volubility.

"Yes," replied Nicholas, willing to soothe him.

"No, no!" said the other, clasping him by the hand. "Should I—should I—tell me that again. Say I should be sure to find you."

"You would," replied Nicholas, with the same humane intention, "and I would help and aid you, and not bring fresh sorrow on you, as I have done here."

The boy caught both the young man's hands passionately in his, and, hugging them to his breast, uttered a few broken sounds, which were unintelligible. Squeers entered, at the moment, and he shrank back into his old corner.

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The cold, feeble dawn of a January morning was stealing in at the windows of the common sleeping-room, when Nicholas, raising himself on his arm, looked among the prostrate forms which on every side surrounded him, as though in search of some particular object.

It needed a quick eye to detect, from among the huddled mass of sleepers, the form of any given individual. As they lay closely packed together, covered, for warmth's sake, with their patched and ragged clothes, little could be distinguished but sharp outlines of pale faces, over which the sombre light shed the same dull heavy color; with here and there a gaunt arm thrust forth; its thinness hidden by no covering, but fully exposed to view, in all its shrunken ugliness. There were some who, lying on their backs with upturned faces and clinched hands, just visible in the leaden light, bore more the aspect of dead bodies than of living creatures; and there were others coiled up into strange and fantastic postures, such as might have been taken for the uneasy efforts of pain to gain some temporary relief, rather than the freaks of slumber. A few—and these were among the youngest of the children—slept peacefully on, with smiles upon their faces, dreaming perhaps of home; but ever and again a deep and heavy sigh, breaking the stillness of the room, announced that some new sleeper had awakened to the misery of another day; and, as morning took the place of night, the smiles gradually faded away with the friendly darkness which had given them birth.

Dreams are the bright creatures of poem and legend, who sport on earth in the night season, and melt away in the first beam of the sun, which lights

grim care and stern reality on their pilgrimage through the world.

Nicholas looked upon the sleepers; at first, with the air of one who gazes upon a scene which, though familiar to him, has lost none of its sorrowful effect in consequence; and afterward, with a more intense and searching scrutiny, as a man would who missed something his eye was accustomed to meet, and had expected to rest upon. He was still occupied in this search, and had half risen from his bed in the eagerness of his quest, when the voice of Squeers was heard, calling from the bottom of the stairs.

"Now, then," cried that gentleman, "are you going to sleep all day up there——"

"You lazy hounds!" added Mrs. Squeers, finishing the sentence, and producing at the same time a sharp sound, like that which is occasioned by the lacing of stays.

"We shall be down directly, sir," replied Nicholas.

"Down directly!" said Squeers. "Ah! you had better be down directly, or I'll be down upon some of you in less. Where's that Smike?"

Nicholas looked hurriedly round again, but made no answer.

"Smike!" shouted Squeers.

"Do you want your head broke in a fresh place, Smike?" demanded his amiable lady, in the same key.

Still there was no reply, and still Nicholas stared about him, as did the greater part of the boys, who were by this time roused.

"Confound his impudence!" muttered Squeers, rapping the stair-rail impatiently with his cane. "Nickleby!"

"Well, sir?"

"Send that obstinate scoundrel down; don't you hear me calling?"

"He is not here, sir," replied Nicholas.

"Don't tell me a lie!" retorted the schoolmaster. "He is."

"He is not," retorted Nicholas angrily; "don't tell me one."

"We shall soon see that," said Mr. Squeers, rushing up stairs. "I'll find him, I warrant you."

With which assurance Mr. Squeers bounced into the dormitory, and, swinging his cane in the air ready for a blow, darted into the corner where the lean body of the drudge was usually stretched at night. The cane descended harmlessly upon the ground. There was nobody there.

"What does this mean?" said Squeers, turning round, with a very queer face. "Where have you hid him?"

"I have seen nothing of him since last night," replied Nicholas.

"Come," said Squeers, evidently frightened, though

he endeavored to look otherwise, "you won't save him this way. Where is he?"

"At the bottom of the nearest pond for aught I know," rejoined Nicholas in a low voice, and fixing his eyes full on the master's face.

"D—n you, what do you mean by that?" retorted Squeers in great perturbation. Without waiting for a reply, he inquired of the boys whether any one among them knew anything of their missing schoolmate.

There was a general hum of anxious denial, in the midst of which, one shrill voice was heard to say (as, indeed, everybody thought):

"Please, sir, I think Smike's run away, sir."

"Ha!" cried Squeers, turning sharp round. "Who said that?"

"Tomkins, please, sir" rejoined a chorus of voices. Mr. Squeers made a plunge into the crowd, and at one dive, caught a very little boy, habited still in his night-gear, and the perplexed expression of whose countenance as he was brought forward, seemed to intimate that he was as yet uncertain whether he was about to be punished or rewarded for the suggestion. He was not long in doubt.

"You think he has run away, do you, sir?" demanded Squeers.

"Yes, please, sir," replied the little boy.

"And what, sir," said Squeers, catching the little

boy suddenly by the arms and whisking up his drapery in a most dexterous manner; "what reason have you to suppose that any boy would want to run away from this establishment? Eh, sir?"

The child raised a dismal cry, by way of answer, and Mr. Squeers, throwing himself into the most favorable attitude for exercising his strength, beat him until the little urchin in his writhings actually rolled out of his hands when he mercifully allowed him to roll away as best he could.

"There," said Squeers. "Now if any other boy thinks Smike has run away, I should be glad to have a talk with him."

There was, of course, a profound silence, during which Nicholas showed his disgust as plainly as looks could show it.

"Well, Nickleby," said Squeers eyeing him maliciously. "*You* think he has run away, I suppose?"

"I think it extremely likely," replied Nicholas, in a quiet manner.

"Oh, you do, do you?" sneered Squeers. "Maybe you know he has?"

"I know nothing of the kind."

"He didn't tell you he was going, I suppose, did he?" sneered Squeers.

"He did not," replied Nicholas, "I am very glad he did not, for it would then have been my duty to have warned you in time."

"Which no doubt you would have been devilish sorry to do," said Squeers, in a taunting fashion.

"I should, indeed," replied Nicholas. "You interpret my feelings with great accuracy."

Mrs. Squeers had listened to this conversation from the bottom of the stairs, but, now losing all patience, she hastily assumed her night-jacket, and made her way to the scene of action.

"What's all this here to do?" said the lady, as the boys fell off right and left, to save her the trouble of clearing a passage with her brawny arms. "What on earth are you talking to him for, Squeery?"

"Why, my dear," said Squeers, "the fact is, that Smike is not to be found."

"Well I know that," said the lady, "and where's the wonder? If you get a parcel of proud-stomached teachers that set the young dogs a rebelling, what else can you look for? Now, young man, you just have the kindness to take yourself off to the school-room, and take the boys off with you, and don't you stir out of there till you have leave given you, or you and I may fall out in a way that'll spoil your beauty, handsome as you think yourself, and so I tell you."

"Indeed!" said Nicholas.

"Yes; and indeed and indeed again, Mister Jackanapes," said the excited lady; "and I wouldn't

keep such as you in the house another hour, if I had my way."

"Nor would you if I had mine," replied Nicholas. "Now, boys!"

"Ah! Now, boys," said Mrs. Squeers, mimicking, as nearly as she could, the voice and manner of the usher. "Follow your leader, boys, and take pattern by Smike, if you dare. See what he'll get for himself, when he is brought back; and, mind! I tell you that you shall have as bad and twice as bad, if you so much as open your mouths about him."

"If I catch him," said Squeers, "I'll only stop short of flaying him alive. I give you notice, boys."

"*If* you catch him," retorted Mrs. Squeers, contemptuously, "you are sure to; you can't help it, if you go the right way to work! Come! Away with you!"

With these words, Mrs. Squeers dismissed the boys, and after a little light skirmishing with those in the rear who were pressing forward to get out of the way, but were detained for a few moments by the throng in front, succeeded in clearing the room, when she confronted her spouse alone.

"He is off!" said Mrs. Squeers. "The cow-house and stable are locked up, so he can't be there: and he's not down stairs anywhere, for the girl has looked. He must have gone York way, and by a public road, too."

"Why must he?" inquired Squeers.

"Stupid!" said Mrs. Squeers, angrily. "He hadn't any money, had he?"

"Never had a penny of his own in his whole life, that I know of," replied Squeers.

"To be sure," rejoined Mrs. Squeers, "and he didn't take anyting to eat with him; that I'll answer for. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Squeers.

"Then, of course," said Mrs. S., "he must beg his way, and he could do that nowhere but on the public road.

"True! Yes; but you would never have thought of it, for all that, if I hadn't said so," replied his wife. "Now, if you take the chaise and go one road, and I borrow Swallow's chaise and go the other, what with keeping our eyes open, and asking questions, one or other of us is pretty certain to lay hold of him."

The worthy lady's plan was adopted and put in execution without a moment's delay. After a very hasty breakfast, and the prosecution of some inquires in the village, the result of which seemed to show that he was on the right track, Squeers started forth in the pony-chaise, intent upon discovery and vengeance. Shortly afterward, Mrs. Squeers, arrayed in the white top-coat, and tied up in various shawls and handkerchiefs, issued forth in another chaise and another direction taking with her a good-size

bludgeon, several odd pieces of strong cord, and a stout laboring man; all provided and carried upon the expedition, with the sole object of assisting in the capture, and (once caught) insuring the safe custody of the unfortunate Smike.

Nicholas remained behind, in a tumult of feeling, sensible that whatever might be the upshot of the boy's flight, nothing but painful and deplorable consequences were likely to ensue from it. Death, from want and exposure to the weather, was the best that could be expected from the protracted wandering of so poor and helpless a creature, alone and unfriended, through a country of which he was wholly ignorant. There was little, perhaps, to choose between this fate and a return to the tender mercies of the Yorkshire school; but the unhappy being had established a hold upon his sympathy and compassion, which made his heart ache at the prospect of the suffering he was destined to undergo. He lingered on in restless anxiety, picturing a thousand possibilities, until the evening of the next day, when Squeers returned alone and unsuccessful.

"No news of the scamp!" said the schoolmaster, who had evidently been stretching his legs on the old principle, not a few times during the journey. "I'll have consolation for this out of somebody, Nickleby, if Mrs. Squeers don't hunt him down. So I give you warning."

"It is not in my power to console you, sir," said Nicholas. "It's nothing to me."

"Isn't it?" said Squeers, in a threatening manner. "We shall see!"

"We shall," rejoined Nicholas.

"Here's the pony run right off his legs, and me obliged to come home with a hack cob, that'll cost fifteen shillings, besides other expenses," said Squeers; "who's to pay for that, do you hear?"

Nicholas shrugged his shoulders, and remained silent.

"I'll have it out of somebody, I tell you," said Squeers, his usual harsh, crafty manner changed to open bullying. "None of your whining vaporings here, Mr. Puppy! but be off to your kennel, for it's past your bedtime! Come, get out!"

Nicholas bit his lip and knit his hand involuntarily, for his finger-ends tingled to avenge the insult; but remembering that the man was drunk, and that it could come to little but a noisy brawl, he contented himself with darting a contemptuous look at the tyrant, and walked, as majestically as he could, upstairs; not a little nettled, however, to observe that Miss Squeers, and Master Squeers, and the servant girl, were enjoying the scene from a snug corner; the two former indulging in many edifying remarks about the presumption of poor upstarts, which occasioned a vast deal of laughter, in which even the

most miserable of all miserable servant girls joined; while Nicholas, stung to the quick, drew over his head such bed-clothes as he had, and sternly resolved that the outstanding account between himself and Mr. Squeers should be settled rather more speedily than the latter anticipated.

Another day came, and Nicholas was scarcely awake when he heard the wheels of a chaise approaching the house. It stopped. The voice of Mrs. Squeers was heard, and in exultation, ordering a glass of spirits for somebody, which was in itself a sufficient sign that something extraordinary had happened. Nicholas hardly dared to look out of the window; but he did so, and the very first object that met his eyes was the wretched Smike, so bedrabbled with mud and rain, so haggard and worn, and wild, that but for his garments being such as no scarecrow was ever seen to wear, he might have been doubtful, even then of his identity.

"Lift him out," said Squeers, after he had literally feasted his eyes in silence upon the culprit. "Bring him in; bring him in!"

"Take care," cried Mrs. Squeers, as her husband proffered his assistance. "We tied his legs under the apron and made 'em fast to the chaise, to prevent him giving us the slip again.

With hands trembling with delight, Squeers unloosened the cord; and Smike, to all appearance

more dead than alive, was brought into the house and securely locked up in a cellar, until such time as Mr. Squeers should deem it expedient to operate upon him, in presence of the assembled-school.

Upon a hasty consideration of the circumstance it may be a matter of surprise to some persons that Mr. and Mrs. Squeers should have taken so much trouble to repossess themselves of an incumbrance of which it was their wont to complain so loudly; but their surprise will cease when the manifold services of the drudge, if performed by anybody else, would have cost the establishment some ten or twelve shillings per week in the shape of wages; and, furthermore, that all runaways were, as a matter of policy, made severe examples of at Dotheboys Hall, inasmuch as, in consequence of the limited extent of its attractions, there was but little inducement beyond the powerful impulse of fear, for any pupil, provided with the usual number of legs and the power of using them, to remain.

The news that Smike had been caught and brought back in triumph ran like wild-fire through the hungry community, and the expectation was on tiptoe all the morning. On tiptoe it was destined to remain, however, until afternoon; when Squeers, having refreshed himself with his dinner, and further strengthened himself by an extra libation or so, made his appearance (accompanied by his amiable partner)

with a countenance of portentous import, and a fearful instrument of flagellation, strong, supple, wax-ended, and new—in short, purchased that morning, expressly for the occasion.

"Is every boy here?" asked Squeers in a tremendous voice.

Every boy was there, but every boy was afraid to speak; so Squeers glared along the lines to assure himself; and every eye drooped, and every head cowered down, as he did so.

"Each boy keep his place," said Squeers, administering his favorite blow to the desk, and regarding with gloomy satisfaction the universal start which it never failed to occasion.

"Nickleby! to your desk, sir."

It was remarked by more than one small observer that there was a very curious and unusual expression in the usher's face; but he took his seat without opening his lips in reply. Squeers, casting a triumphant glance at his assistant and a look of most comprehensive despotism on the boys, left the room, and shortly afterwards returned, dragging Smike by the collar—or rather by that fragment of his jacket which was nearest the place where his collar would have been, had he boasted such a decoration.

In any other place the appearance of the wretched, jaded, spiritless, object would have occasioned a murmur of compassion and remonstrance. It had

some effect even there; for the lookers-on moved uneasily in their seats: and a few of the boldest ventured to steal looks at each other, expressive of indignation and pity.

They were lost on Squeers, however, whose gaze was fastened on the luckless Smike, as he inqnired, according to custom in such cases, whether he had anything to say for himself.

"Nothing, I suppose?" said Squeers, with a diabolical grin.

Smike glanced round, and his eyes rested, for an instant, on Nicholas, as if he expected him to intercede; but his look was riveted on his desk.

"Have you anything to say?" demanded Squeers again; giving his right arm two or three flourishes to try its power and suppleness. "Stand a little out of the way, Mrs. Squeers, my dear; I've hardly got room enough."

"Spare me, sir!" cried Smike.

"Oh! that's all, is it?" said Squeers.

"Yes, I'll flog you within an inch of your life, and spare you that."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mrs. Squeers, "that's a good 'un!"

"I was driven to do it," said Smike, faintly; and casting another imploring look at him.

"Driven to do it were you?" said Squeers. "Oh! it wasn't your fault; it was mine I suppose—eh?"

"A nasty, ungrateful, pig-headed, brutish, obstinate, sneaking dog," exclaimed Mrs. Squeers, taking Smike's head under her arm, and administering a cuff to every epithet; "what does he mean by that?"

"Stand aside, my dear," replied Squeers. "We'll try and find out."

Mrs. Squeers being out of breath with her exertions, complied. Squeers caught the boy firmly in his grip; one desperate cut had fallen on his body—he was wincing from the lash and uttering a scream of pain—it was raised again, and again about to fall—when Nicholas Nickleby suddenly starting up, cried, "Stop!" in a voice that made the rafters ring.

"Who cried stop?" said Squeers, turning savagely round.

"I," said Nicholas, stepping forward. "This must not go on."

"Must not go on!" cried Squeers, almost, in a shriek.

"No!" thundered Nicholas.

Aghast and stupefied by the boldness of the interference, Squeers released his hold of Smike, and falling back a pace or two, gazed upon Nicholas with looks that were positively frightful.

"I say must not," repeated Nicholas, nothing daunted; "shall not! I will prevent it."

Squeers continued to gaze upon him; with his eyes

starting out of his head; but astonishment had actually for the moment, bereft him of speech.

"You have disregarded all my quiet interference in the miserable lad's behalf," said Nicholas; "you have returned no answer to the letter in which I begged forgiveness for him, and offered to be responsible that he would remain quietly here. Don't blame me for this public interference. You have brought it upon yourself; not I."

"Sit down, beggar!" screamed Squeers, almost beside himself with rage, and seizing Smike as he spoke.

"Wretch," rejoined Nicholas, fiercely, "touch him at your peril! I will not stand by and see it done. My blood is up, and I have the strength of ten such men as you. Look to yourself, for by Heaven I will not spare you, if you drive me on!"

"Stand back!" cried Squeers, brandishing his weapon.

"I have a long series of insults to avenge," said Nicholas, flushed with passion; "and my indignation is aggravated by the dastardly cruelties practiced on helpless infancy in this foul den. Have a care; for if you do raise the devil within me, the consequences shall fall heavily upon your own head."

He had scarcely spoken, when Squeers, in a violent outbreak of wrath, and with a cry like the howl of a wild beast, spat upon him, and struck him a

blow across the face with his instrument of torture, which raised up a bar of livid flesh as it was inflicted. Smarting with the agony of the blow, and concentrating into that one moment all his feelings of rage, scorn and indignation, Nicholas sprang upon him, wrested the weapon from his hand, and, pinning him by the throat, beat the ruffian till he roared for mercy.

The boys—with the exception of Master Squeers, who, coming to his father's assistance, harassed the enemy in the rear—moved not, hand or foot; but Mrs. Squeers, with many shrieks for aid, hung on to the tail of her partner's coat, and endeavored to drag him from his infuriated adversary; while Miss Squeers, who had been peeping through the key-hole in the expectation of a very different scene, darted in at the very beginning of the attack, and after launching a shower of ink-stands at the usher's head, beat Nicholas to her heart's content.

Nicholas, in the full torrent of his violence, felt the blows no more than if they had been dealt with feathers; but, becoming tired of the noise and uproar, and feeling that his arm grew weak besides, he threw all his remaining strength into half-a-dozen finishing cuts, and flung Squeers from him, with all the force he could muster. The violence of his fall precipitated Mrs. Squeers completely over an adjacent form; and Squeers, striking his head against it

in his descent, lay at his full length on the ground, stunned and motionless.

Having brought affairs to this happy termination, and ascertained, to his thorough satisfaction, that Squeers was only stunned, and not dead (upon which point he had had some unpleasant doubts ar first), Nicholas left his family to restore him, and retired to consider what course he had better adopt. He looked anxiously round for Smike as he left the room, but he was nowhere to be seen.

After a brief consideration, he packed up a few clothes in a small leathern valise, and, finding that nobody offered to oppose his progress, marched boldly out by the front door, and, shortly afterward, struck into the road which led to Greta Bridge.

When he had cooled sufficiently to be enabled to give his present circumstances some little reflection, they did not appear in a very encouraging light; he had only four shillings and a few pence in his pocket, and was something more than two hundred and fifty miles from London, whither he resolved to direct his steps, that he might ascertain, among other things, what account of the morning's proceedings Mr. Squeers transmitted to his most affectionate uncle.

. . . . . .

He did not travel far that afternoon, for by this time it was nearly dark, and there had been a heavy fall of snow, which not only rendered the way toil-

some, but the track uncertain and difficult to find after daylight, save by experienced wayfarers. He lay that night at a cottage where beds were let at a cheap rate to the more humble class of travellers; and rising betimes next morning, made his way before night to Boroughbridge. Passing through that town in search of some cheap resting place, he stumbled upon an empty barn within a couple of hundred yards of the roadside, in a warm corner of which he stretched his weary limbs and soon fell asleep.

When he awoke next morning, and tried to recollect his dreams, which had been all connected with his recent sojourn at Dotheboys Hall, he sat up and rubbed his eyes, and stared—not with the most composed countenance possible—at some motionless object which seemed to be stationed within a few yards in front of him.

"Strange!" cried Nicholas; "can this be some lingering creation of the visions that have scarcely left me? It cannot be real—and yet I—I am awake! Smike!"

The form moved, rose, advanced, and dropped upon its knees at his feet. It was Smike indeed.

"Why do you kneel to me?" said Nicholas, hastily raising him.

"To go with you—anywhere—everywhere—to the world's end—to the church-yard grave," replied

Smike, clinging to his hand. "Let me, oh, do let me! You are my home—my kind friend—take me with you, pray."

"I am a friend who can do little for you," said Nicholas, kindly. "How came you here?"

He had followed him, it seemed; had never lost sight of him all the way; had watched when he slept and when he halted for refreshment; and had feared to appear before, lest he should be sent back. He had not intended to appear now, but Nicholas had awakened more suddenly than he had looked for, and he had had no time to conceal himself.

"Poor fellow," said Nicholas, "your hard fate denies you any friend but one, and he is nearly as poor and helpless as yourself."

"May I—may I go with you?" asked Smike, timidly. "I will be your faithful, hard-working servant, I will, indeed. I want no clothes," added the poor creature, drawing his rags together; "these will do very well. I only want to be near you."

"And you shall," cried Nicholas. "And the world shall deal by you as it does by me, till one or both of ur shall quit it for a better. Come."

With these words, he strapped his burden on his shoulders, and, taking his stick in one hand, extended the other to his delighted charge; and so they passed out of the old barn together.

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